



Service Level Agreement 2024-2025

Southampton Maintained Schools

Education Welfare Service

1. Introduction

Southampton Local Authority's duties of enforcing school attendance are the responsibility of Education Welfare Officers (EWOs). To do this we work in partnership with schools, academies, pupils, parents/carers to improve attendance and minimise disaffection. Our work is essential to ensure that pupils are able to make the best possible use of the educational opportunities which are available to them and maximise their future potential.

2. Service Options

Core Work - Statutory Duties

EWOs undertake proceedings on behalf of the Local Authority, in respect of parents/carers who do not ensure their children's regular attendance at school or fail to enrol them at school or otherwise. The EWOs will make relevant investigations, assessments, and action plans in partnership with pupils, parent(s)/carers, staff and other relevant parties, concerning attendance at school or alternative educational provision.

The EWO offers information to parents/carers and pupils about rights and responsibilities concerning attendance and the legal process, during any intervention with a family. EWOs ensure accountability for cases taken to court, and liaise with schools, concerning such cases.

In order to complete the work agreed between the EWO and the school, intervention needs to be completed as outlined in the Education Welfare Service process (updated September 2023), in consultation with the allocated EWO and evidence given directly to the Education Welfare Officer or sent securely via Anycomms. The evidence for each referral will have been explained/consulted upon with the EWO prior to the referral being made. Before any referral can be accepted by the Education Welfare Service, there is an expectation that several early help/preventative measures have been completed prior to the referral being made and as per the process. Schools are responsible for engaging with and informing parents/carers of the potential involvement of the Education Welfare Service. A **Targeting Support Meeting** in line with new attendance guidance **Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance (2022)** will take place once a term and will focus/prioritise children/young people at 90% attendance and below in line with the national definition of persistent absence and 50% attendance and below in line with the national definition of severe absence.

Statutory menu

All the following services are free of charge for all schools unless otherwise stated.

- Initial Investigation and review on receipt of confirmed referral
- Fast Track to Attendance (PACE cautioned) meeting chaired by Service Manager or Acting Senior or experienced EWO
- Allocated Education Welfare Officer at Fast Track Meeting
- Fast Track review meeting and action plan

Prosecutions

- Preparation of court summons
- Application to the court for the case to be heard
- Presentation of the case in court by legal co-ordinator
- Reporting back on results including details of actions required
- Liaison with legal services

Penalty Notices

- Issuing of penalty notices in line with the Code of Conduct for the academic year.

Education Supervision Orders

- Application to the Court for a hearing date
- Presentation of case in the Family Proceedings Court
- Responsible officer role to monitor progress of Order
- When required in the event of non-compliance. Breach of order

School Attendance Order

- Administration of the order
- Follow up to ensure pupil enrolled at designated school
- **Child Performance and Employment:** direct referrals to the Education Welfare Service and any illegal employment referrals to [Child employment and work experience \(southampton.gov.uk\)](http://southampton.gov.uk)
- **Liaison with Children Missing Education (CME) Tracking:** direct referrals received from CME Officer within the local authority.
- **Truancy sweeps/patrols in partnership with the Police**

Where possible, the link EWO will be allocated the case work, however at times it may be necessary for other members of the Education Welfare Service to carry out some of the work within the school, either due to certain members of staff having areas of specialism or expertise, workload or where a member of staff is absent due to illness. In the event of a staff member reporting in sick, on leave we will endeavour to cover on the day or re-arrange the school visit to a convenient date.

Link Education Welfare Officer

All schools are allocated a named link EWO who acts as a point of contact for consultation on the LA EWS process and for advice and guidance. The Link EWO can be contacted by phone, Teams or e mail for general queries and advice. Contact numbers for EWOs are available on the Education pages of the Southampton City Council website. Alternatively, you can contact the team via education.welfare.service@southampton.gov.uk where a duty officer is available daily, in term time, to respond to any queries, provide additional advice and guidance.

Purchasing a Link Education Welfare Officer and additional services where there will be a charge

In addition to statutory work, all schools can purchase a number of additional (non-statutory) services from EWOs including any of the suggested areas below. The list is not exhaustive. We are pleased to be able to offer the option to schools of purchasing an Education Welfare Officer based on the daily rate of **£368** EWOs will focus on the non-statutory, preventative pupil absence case work before the initial investigation/review and Fast Track to Attendance process is instigated, thereby supporting schools to provide prevention and an early offer of help in relation to absence to support parents, carers, families, children and young people and reducing the need to instigate the statutory function and improve overall attendance.

Purchased EWO services can include

- Early intervention/reducing barriers to attendance meetings in schools – the Education Welfare Officer can attend meetings with parents, carers, children and young people where absence is falling or lower than expected.
- Individual casework management on absence issues not in the statutory process to provide advice, support, consultation, and action plan in line with the Education Welfare Service process and procedures.
- Unannounced Visits/Home visits – Education Welfare Officers can be purchased and deployed to make unannounced/home visits if there is a non-attendance or safeguarding concern or for a young person due to prolonged non- attendance.
- EWOs can complete Early Help Assessment with the family on behalf of the school.
- Parenting contracts on behalf of the school in consultation with school.
- Additional 'audits' of attendance outside the free/termly **Targeting Support Meeting**
- Intervention Days – an EWO/or EWOs can attend the school for a morning and/or afternoon to meet with young people and their parents/carers in collaboration with the school
- To discuss attendance issues, prior to statutory intervention, and develop action plans and recommendations to improve attendance.
- Implement a programme of group work with pupils in relation to poor attendance to improve outcomes.
- Reviewing significant attendance groups e.g. SEND, FSM, Gender, Ethnic minority, pupil premium groups, more in depth coding analysis to ensure compliance with coding.

- Evaluation of attendance data on case work to show impact of non-statutory work upon overall attendance
 - Implement consistent approaches to attendance processes, policies, letters, penalty notices, leave of absence procedures within schools
 - Support the transition of pupils through phased transfers
 - Attendance training – for new staff, governors - especially new to role attendance officers including best practice.
 - Attendance policy – support in completion.
 - SAM attendance assemblies: primary sector
 - Attendance assemblies: secondary sector
 - SAM on the gate: to promote punctuality/ late clinics/late gates.
 - Any other bespoke requirements can be discussed on request with EWO to improve attendance and outcomes of young people.
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- Bespoke safeguarding training offer for schools/education settings – Whole school or Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) training in line with the latest **Keeping Children Safe in Education can be found here. [Southampton Directory | Designated Safeguarding Lead Officer for Education Settings](#)**
 - Should you have a bespoke requirement, requests should be made to Kerica Hunt on the contact number outlined below.

Please note, for chargeable services, Schools cannot carry forward unused days from one financial year to the next.

3. Service Costs

The daily rate for an Education Welfare Officer is **£368**. The minimum purchase one day. If schools want to purchase EWO provision in partnership with other academies or schools, then this can be negotiated.

4. Service Contacts and Performance Review

The contact for the Education Welfare Service is:

Kerica Jane Hunt

Service Manager – Education Welfare Service

Southampton City Council

Civic Centre

Southampton

Tel: 023 8083 4229/07796278473

Email: Kerica.hunt@southampton.gov.uk

We monitor the performance of the service by reviewing individual interventions, evaluation of any training delivered and seeking regular feedback from pupils, parents and school staff and other professionals.

The service provision will be quality assured, and performance managed by the Service Manager/Acting Senior EWOs – Education Welfare Service.

The Service Manager, who is registered with Social Work England, will oversee and provide the Officers within the service with professional supervision each month which is included in the cost.

Any queries, concerns, or complaints about the overall operation of the scheme should be addressed to Kerica Hunt, Service Manager - Education Welfare Service, at the above address.

