

Attendance Policy

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1. Rationale

Wrotham School is committed to the continuous raising of achievement of all our students. Regular attendance is critical if our students are to be successful and benefit from the opportunities presented to them. This policy represents our commitment to expect 100% attendance from all of our students, which is achieved by many children. It sets out the responsibilities of all members of the school community in ensuring excellent attendance, establish the legal framework and to lay out the school's response to poor attendance.

In accordance with the Department for Education (DfE) advice to schools, Wrotham School will:

- Promote good attendance and reduce absence, including persistent absence;
- Ensure every child has access to full-time education;
- Act early to address patterns of absence.

The Governors, Headteacher and school staff will work in partnership with parents and carers to achieve excellent attendance at Wrotham School.

The term 'parent' includes all natural parents (whether they are married or not), any person who has parental responsibility and any person who has day to day care of the child (lives with and looks after the child).

1.1 Principles

- Receiving a full-time, suitable education is a child's legal entitlement - it is a parent's/carer's legal responsibility to ensure this happens.
- Attending school regularly aids intellectual, social and emotional development and is essential if children are to benefit fully from their school life.
- Attending school regularly safeguards the welfare of children while they are not in the care of their parents.
- All children whose attendance is irregular will be considered vulnerable.

1.2 Aims

- To ensure that all children attend school regularly and punctually to maximise their educational achievement and social development. Statistics show a direct link between under-achievement and attendance below 95%.
- To safeguard pupils to the best of the school's ability.
- To ensure that all those responsible for children's education, including parents, carers, staff, and Governors understand and accept their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- To minimise absence from school, thereby reducing levels of persistent absence. Any pupil with attendance below 90% is classed by the DfE as a Persistent Absentee (PA). Any pupil with attendance below 50% is classed by the DfE as a Severely Persistent Absentee (SPA). Schools are required to identify all PA pupils and report to the DfE at regular intervals during the academic year.
- To improve the life chances of the children attending school and prepare them to be fully contributing citizens when they reach adulthood. Regular attenders are more successful in transferring between primary school, secondary school, higher education and employment or training.

2. Promoting Good Attendance

Wrotham School will use all possible opportunities to promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality. These will include the Home-School agreement, newsletters, rewards and incentives for good or significantly improving attendance. The foundation for good attendance is a strong partnership between the school, parents/carers and children.

Wrotham School will:

- Provide and promote a welcoming and positive atmosphere so that children feel safe and know that their presence is valued.
- Raise awareness of the importance of full attendance and punctuality using newsletters and other forms of communications with parents making attendance a high priority.
- Identify an attendance champion with responsibility for monitoring, improving and evaluating school attendance. At Wrotham School this role is fulfilled by Mrs Abbott (Headteacher) and Mr Boudreau (Assistant Headteacher) their contact details are available on the school website.
- Follow a structured process for managing poor attendance. This may include writing to parents, inviting them to attend meetings and making arrangements in school to support their child to attend school more regularly.
- Encourage our children to have a positive attitude towards attendance and punctuality so that they can retain this into adult life.
- Celebrate good attendance by issuing rewards, character strengths, certificates and other incentives.
- Ensure that attendance is effectively monitored using our electronic registration system and that absences are followed up promptly.
- Communicate effectively with other agencies (GPs, Kent County Council Integrated Children's Services, School Health etc.) to support children with any issues there might be.
- Meet the legal requirements for recording pupil absence using the correct registration procedures and codes with reference to authorised and unauthorised absence.
- Have procedures in place to help children settle in after a long absence. It is important that on return from an unavoidable absence all pupils are made to feel welcome. This will include ensuring that the pupil is supported to catch up on missed work and brought up to date with any information that has been passed to the other pupils.
- Make arrangements to meet the requirements of pupils with additional educational needs or an Education Health Care Plan.

2.1 School Roles and Responsibilities

The Governing Body will:

- Review the attendance policy annually;
- Monitor its implementation;
- Monitor progress against school targets;
- Monitor for issues of Equal Opportunity.

The Headteacher will:

- Set attendance targets as part of the school development plan and target-setting process
- Monitor progress
- Report to the Governing body attendance reports

The Assistant Headteacher with responsibility for attendance will:

- Oversee the attendance arrangements
- Work with the pastoral team to ensure the efficient running of the system
- Make periodic checks of the registers to monitor absence
- Support the attendance officer with issues of inadequate registering
- Arrange and/or oversee appropriate training for all staff
- Inform the Headteacher of the progress of the attendance targets
- Advise the Headteacher of any strategies that could be initiated or improved
- Determine (with the attendance officer) whether to authorise any proposed absences requested by letter or email, or absences for which the school have not been notified
- Work with the attendance officer and Heads of Year to ensure Pupil Premium attendance targets are met across all year groups
- Notify that if a student of compulsory school age fails to attend regularly their parents commit an offence. Parents will be notified through the policy and by directing parents to the policy when a letter is sent.
- Initiate, with appropriate staff, strategies to improve attendance
- Receive regular updates from the attendance officer on intervention requested from outside agencies
- Liaise with local In-Year Fair Access (IYFA) Panels, outside agencies and the police when they wish to exercise their powers to enforce truanting students to return to school.
- Make a termly report with statistics to the governing body.
- Work with the attendance officer, SENCo and Heads of Year to ensure pupils with SEND attendance targets are met across all year groups
- Monitor and track attendance for any student that is educated offsite as part of our safeguarding responsibilities.
- Ensure that pupils that require a Part Time Timetable (PTT) are logged with the local authority, monitored and reviewed to ensure that they supporting pupils in the best possible way and are in place for the shortest amount of time possible. Where a pupil has a social worker, the school will keep them informed and involved in the process.
- Available to attend Targeted Support Meetings (TSM) with KPAS Attendance Officer.
- Available to attend the KPAS 4 formal attendance meetings.
- Be involved in any reintegration or EBSA programmes where necessary.
- Report to Headteacher and Governors with termly attendance reports comparing figures to those nationally.

Heads of Year and Heads of School will:

- Have responsibility for meeting attendance targets for their allocated year group(s).
- Hold regular meetings with progress tutors in which attendance is a standing agenda item
- Ensure that all student absences are tracked by their progress tutors through conversations and checking SIMS for entries by the attendance officer
- Hold to account any tutors who are not registering in line with policy and arrange training where appropriate
- Ensure that all suspected truancy is followed up with the attendance officer
- Contact parents over student absences when there is a cause for concern
- Liaise with the Deputy Headteacher to review patterns of attendance/punctuality and agree appropriate strategies.
- Promote excellent attendance through a range of strategies agreed with the Deputy Headteacher.
- Be involved in any reintegration or EBSA programmes where necessary.

Progress Tutors will:

- Ensure that students are registered accurately during form time.
- Ensure that they know the reason for any student absence.
- Follow up cases of unauthorised absence.
- Keep the Head of Year and Attendance Officer informed of any signs of suspected truancy
- Inform the Head of Year and Attendance Officer of any possible underlying problems which might account for absences and lateness.
- Check attendance data weekly and make students aware of their attendance percentages during Form Time on a Friday.
- Be involved in any reintegration or EBSA programmes where necessary.

Teaching staff will:

- Inform the Attendance Officer of the names of students who are absent without notification.
- Inform oncall of any pupil that is missing from the register that is identified as red on their register.
- Be responsible for the accurate official registration of students within 15 minutes from the start of each lesson using SIMS.
- Be responsible to update the register with a late mark and minutes that a pupil is late on the register by the end of the lesson.
- Welcome any student with long term absence back into the classroom without question – with any questions being addressed to the attendance officer.
- Be involved in any reintegration or EBSA programmes where necessary.

The Attendance Officer is required to:

- Enter attendance/absence data into SIMS
- Prepare attendance reports for the Deputy Headteacher
- Prepare reports for Heads of Year and Heads of School
- Contact parent/guardian on the first day of absence and each day of absence unless pre-notified or long-term medical absence has been provided
- Call parents/guardians of Pupil Premium and SEND students on every day of absence
- Support targeted students
- Keep parents informed of attendance concerns through regular letters and/or phone calls
- Hold meetings with parents when attendance is not improving
- Hold meetings with Pastoral team to develop strategies for Persistent Absentees
- Escalate attendance to Leadership Team when required
- Seek the support of the KPAS Attendance Officer when interventions have not succeeded.
- Be involved in any reintegration or EBSA programmes where necessary.

The KPAS Attendance Officer (Kent County Council) will:

- liaise with the Attendance Officer and Attendance Champion regarding concerns over student absence
- support the school in improving the attendance of its students
- work with parents of children with poor attendance where a referral has been made
- Advise the school as to its legal obligations and complete appropriate paperwork for any legal proceedings.

The SENCO will:

- Support students on the SEN register who have regular patterns of non-attendance
- Be involved in any reintegration or EBSA programmes where necessary.
- Liaise with KCC and parents of EHCP students and requirements for school transport where needed.
- Inform the Attendance Officer of any chances to a full time education plan.

2.2 Parental Responsibilities

Parents have a legal duty to ensure that their children attend school regularly and arrive on time. Regular attendance is essential to the all-round development of the child and they should be allowed to take full advantage of educational opportunities available to them in order to make good progress in their learning. Poor attendance undermines their educational attainment and progress and sometimes puts pupils at risk by encouraging anti-social behaviour.

It is parents' responsibility to contact the school on the first day their child is absent. This is a safeguarding requirement so that all parties know your child is safe and their whereabouts are known. Parents should regularly update the school during any period of absence from school and inform the school when their child is returning.

We expect parents to:

- Promote the importance of good attendance and punctuality with their child, aiming for 100% attendance each year.
- Keep absences to a minimum.
- Ensure that their child arrives at school on time each day.
- Provide up to date contact numbers and changes of address.
- Telephone or email Wrotham School when their child is unable to attend on the first day of the absence and each day thereafter with the reason for this. Parents should also let Wrotham School know if their child is going to be late e.g. if a car breaks down or an urgent appointment has been made.
- Provide a written explanation for the absence when their child returns to school.
- Parents should provide medical evidence indicating attendance at the dentist, doctor or optician, if asked to do so. Whenever possible all medical/dental appointments should be made outside of school hours unless an emergency has arisen. This can include medical appointment cards, photographs of prescribed medication etc.
- Contact the school at the earliest opportunity if their child is experiencing any difficulties and the school will do everything possible to resolve the issues.

Ensuring a child's regular attendance at school is a parent/carer's legal responsibility under **Section 444 of the 1996 Education Act** and permitting absence from school that is not authorised by the school may create an offence in law.

2.3 Student Responsibilities

We expect students to:

- Attend every day unless they are too ill, or the absence has been authorised by the school.
- Arrive at school on time.
- Go to registration and all lessons on time.
- Be responsible for knowing their current attendance, which they can view on Satchel one.

3. Process for Managing Attendance

Pupils are expected to arrive by 8.25am. All pupils who arrive late must report to the school office where the reason for lateness will be recorded. The pupil must sign in via the electronic console in reception. The pupil will be marked as late in the register (registration code L).

There are two sessions in a school day. There is a morning and afternoon session for each school day. The morning register will close 30 minutes from the start of lesson one at 9:05am. Pupils arriving after the register has closed will be marked as late after registration and this will count as an unauthorised absence (registration code U). Students who arrive after 8.35am must sign in at reception.

Frequent lateness after the register has closed will be discussed with parents and could provide grounds for further action (see appendix 1).

3.1 Attendance Monitoring

We will monitor attendance and absence data weekly, termly and yearly across the school and at an individual pupil level. We will also identify whether or not there are particular groups of children whose absences may be a cause for concern. As part of the new statutory requirements, whole school attendance data is automatically shared daily with the Department for Education and Kent County Council.

Since poor attendance is habitual, prevention and early intervention is crucial. School staff will analyse attendance and absence data regularly to identify pupils or cohorts that need additional support. They will then use this analysis to provide targeted support to these pupils and their families. In developing support strategies, they will also look into historic and emerging patterns of attendance and absence. Senior Leaders, Heads of Year and Progress Tutors will receive regular attendance reports to facilitate discussions with pupils and families. They will use the data to monitor and evaluate the impact of any interventions put in place in order to modify them and inform future strategies.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and, at all stages of improving attendance, staff will work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance. To maximise support and ensure early intervention, pupils are placed in an attendance tier related to the number of days they have been absent from school and their risk of underachieving due to absence.

As part of our work to improve pupils' attendance and reduce absence, school staff will phone and write to parents, hold Attendance Improvement Meetings, conduct Home Visits and liaise with Early Help and Children's Social Services.

For any pupils with attendance below 90%, the attendance team may invite parents/carers for a meeting to discuss the situation. If absences persist, they will refer the matter to KPAS. On a case by case basis, the school will request medical evidence to verify a reason for absence. We encourage parents/carers to provide this evidence even if it has not been requested.

4 Authorised and Unauthorised Absence

4.1 Leave of Absence Requests

Wrotham School can grant leave of absence in very exceptional circumstances. Should you wish to apply for leave of absence, a letter should be written to the Attendance Officer who will liaise with the Headteacher. Parents/carers will be advised of the outcome by email and/or letter. Should parents/carers wish to appeal this decision, this should be addressed in writing to the Headteacher.

4.2 Authorised Absence

Authorised absences are mornings or afternoons away from school that have an acceptable reason, agreed by the school. Section 444 of the Education Act 1996 says that parents are guilty of an offence of failing to secure attendance at school unless they can prove that the child was absent due to:

- Leave already granted by the school
- Sickness or any unavoidable cause - this must only relate to the child, not their parent or other family member.
- Medical/dental appointments that could not be arranged outside of school hours

- Religious observance – where the day is exclusively set apart for religious observance by the religious body to which the pupil's parents belong.
- Failure by the Local Authority to provide transport
- Traveller pupils travelling for occupational purposes. Absence may be authorised only when a traveller family is known to be travelling for occupational purposes and has agreed this with the school, but it is not known whether the pupil is attending educational provision

IN LAW THESE ARE THE ONLY ACCEPTABLE REASONS FOR A CHILD BEING ABSENT FROM SCHOOL

4.2.1 Long Term Medical Absence

When a student is absent because of long term illness a Health Care Plan/Risk Assessment will need to be initiated by the Head of Year and, where necessary, the Local Authority School Nurse. This will provide structure for the student to be reintegrated back into the classroom. A Health Care Plan can only be completed once a diagnosis is confirmed and prognosis given by the medical team supporting the student. Where the student needs the support of the Hospital Education and Reintegration Service (HERS) this will be sought/referred to by the medical professional responsible for the student's case. The school will take the lead role in planning and reviewing the student's provision in conjunction with HERS.

4.2.2 Absence for Gypsy, Roma, Traveller Pupils

Gypsy, Roma or Traveller pupils are expected to attend school in the same way as all other pupils and parents should aim for their child to achieve 100% attendance. If a child has no fixed abode and the family are required to travel for the purposes of the parents' trade or business, adjustments can be made.

Requests for absence must be made in advance and a return date provided. If not, a pupil may be referred to the local authority as a Child Missing Education and could be removed from the school roll.

4.3 Unauthorised Absence

Unauthorised Absence Unauthorised absences are those which the school does not consider reasonable and for which no "leave" has been given. With unauthorised absence, the school does not agree that the reason given by a parent is acceptable. This type of absence can lead to the Local Authority using sanctions and/or legal proceedings. Unauthorised reasons include:

- Parents/carers keeping children off unnecessarily
- Truancy before or during the school day
- Absences which have never been properly explained
- Pupils who arrive at school after the register has closed
- Shopping, looking after other children or birthdays
- Day trips and holidays in term time, unless an authorised school trip
- Oversleeping
- Absence to look after an unwell sibling/family member
- Inadequate uniform
- Confusion over term dates
- School refusal

4.3.1 Holidays in Term Time

- From September 2013, the Government has legislated that no holidays will be authorised in term time
- Holidays not agreed by the school, but taken, are unauthorised absences and shown in the register by code 'G'
- If parents take their children on holiday during term time, we will request that the Local Authority issue a Fixed Penalty Notice.

4.3.2 Fixed Penalty Notices

The school will issue and administer penalty notices in collaboration with the Local Authority Enforcement Officer, providing that such requests are made using Penalty Notice Request form.

The penalty is £160 and reduced to £80 if paid within 21 days. This is per parent, per child. Failure to pay may result in prosecution where on conviction you would be liable to a fine of up to £1000. A Penalty Notice may be issued when a pupil has been absent for 10 or more sessions (5 school days) without authorisation during a rolling period of 10 school weeks. This can be a combination of unauthorised absence. These sessions can be consecutive or not. The period of 10 school weeks can also span different terms or school years.

- Penalty notices may be issued where it is determined that to do so would be an effective and appropriate addition to ongoing casework with a student and their parent. The Headteacher will be informed if this action is taken
- Where feasible, parents should be warned of the possibility of a penalty notice being issued
- Where holiday is taken in term time, a Fixed Penalty Notice will be issued.
- Parentally condoned absence
- Delayed return from leave of absence without prior school agreement
- Persistent late arrival at school (after the register has closed)
- Where an excluded child is found in a public place during school hours during the first five days of a fixed term suspension.

Wrotham School asks that parents fully support this policy as a vital contribution towards their child's education.

5 Children Missing Education

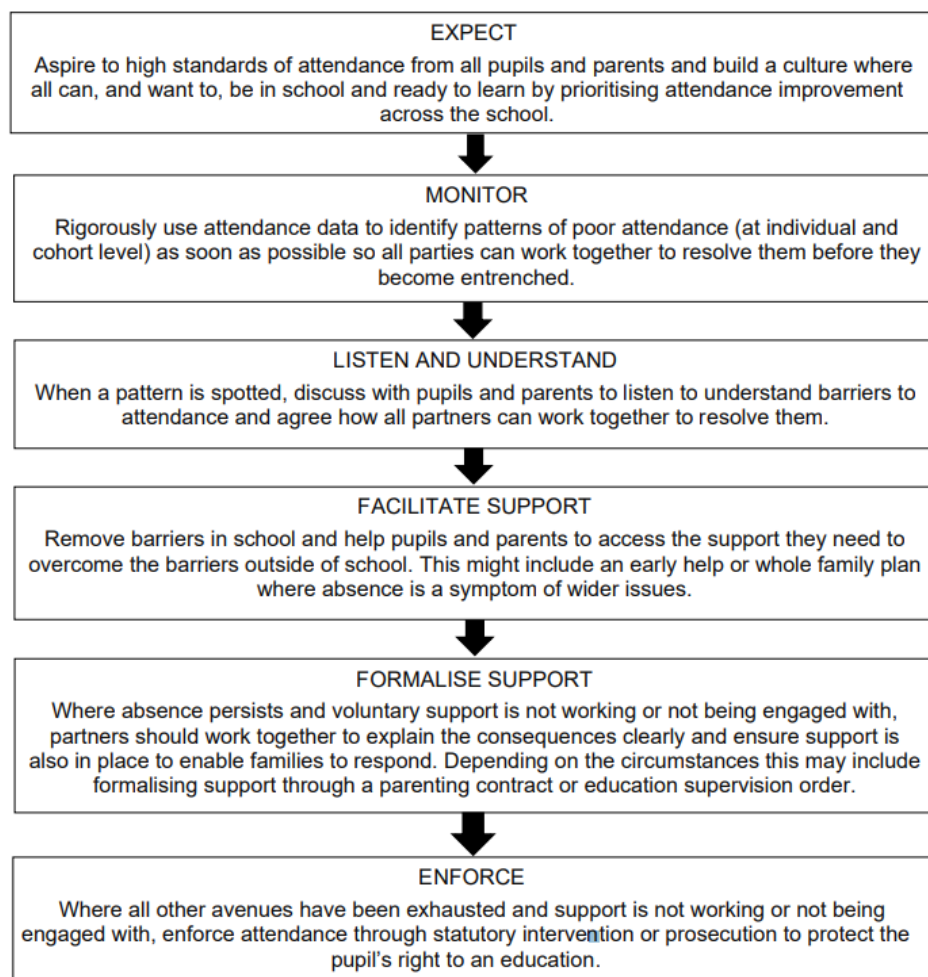
Parents must inform Wrotham School in writing if they are planning to remove their child from the school roll. This must include the details of the arrangements that will be put in place for the child's education.

The school will follow the Department for Education guidance relating to Children Missing Education (CME). School will monitor absence closely if a pupil has been absent for a continuous period of ten school days and has been unable to ascertain the whereabouts of a pupil, they will make a referral to the Local Authority.

Where a pupil has not returned to school for ten consecutive school days after a leave of absence 15 or is absent from school for reasons statistically recorded as unauthorised absence for twenty consecutive school days¹⁶, the pupil's name can be removed from the admission register when the school and the local authority have failed, after jointly making reasonable enquiries, to find out the location and circumstances of the child or have succeeded but agree there are no reasonable grounds to believe that they will attend the school again. In deciding there are no reasonable grounds to believe the pupil will attend the school again both school and local authority must agree, including that there are no reasonable steps that could be taken (either jointly or separately) to secure the pupil's attendance. Neither ground for deletion applies if there are reasonable grounds to believe that the pupil is unable to attend because of sickness or unavoidable cause.

6 Working together to improve attendance

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. All partners should work together to:



6.1 Promoting Regular Attendance

Helping to create a habit of regular attendance is everybody's responsibility - parents, pupils and all members of Wrotham School staff. To maintain a focus on this, we will maintain regular contact with parents and carers regarding their child's attendance and report regularly on how their child is attending. At Wrotham School we have rewards and incentives to celebrate and promote children's attendance with individual, class and whole school rewards based on weekly, termly and annual attendance. We know that every day matters and want to ensure that pupils are making the most of all the opportunities we provide them on a daily basis. We do consider the circumstances of individuals and take them into account when rewarding children's attendance (for example, absences that are as a result of medical issues) to ensure that all children are rewarded fairly. However, we like to remind parents that the true reward of attendance will be seen in your child's progress, not only academically, but also socially, emotionally and through their personal growth.

6.2 Contact Information

Headteacher and Senior Attendance Champion: Mrs Laura Abbott LAbbott@wrotham.kent.sch.uk

Attendance Phone Number: 01732 905871

Attendance email: Attendance@wrotham.kent.sch.uk

7 Related guidance and Legislation

Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024)

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\)](#)

[\(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

School Attendance Parental Responsibility Measures (2015)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a80ce9740f0b623026959aa/School_attendance_parental_responsibility_measures_statutory_guidance.pdf

Children Missing Education (2016)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5a7f5e4a40f0b6230268f135/Children_Missing_Education_-_statutory_guidance.pdf

Keeping Children Safe in Education (2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6650a1967b792ffff71a83e8/Keeping_children_safe_in_education_2024.pdf

Working Together to Safeguard Children (2023)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2>

Behaviour in Schools (2024)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65ce3721e1bdec001a3221fe/Behaviour_in_schools_-_advice_for_headteachers_and_school_staff_Feb_2024.pdf

Suspension and Permanent Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England, including pupil movement (2023)

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/64ef773513ae1500116e30db/Suspension_and_permanent_exclusion_guidance_september_23.pdf

Supporting pupils at school with medical conditions (2015)

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions--3>

Equality Act 2010 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2010/15/contents> The Education Act 1996,

Part 6 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/56/section/444>

The Education Act 2002, Part 3 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

The Education and Inspections Act 2006 <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/32/contents>

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) (Amendment) regulations 2013

<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2013/757/regulation/2/made>

Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools [Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)

Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1136965/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf