Standard Operating Procedure for schools on referring to the Education Investigation Service (EIS)

Before making a referral a school should be satisfied that they have done all that they can to engage with the parents and student ensuring appropriate support is offered to improve school attendance. This should include, for example, telephone calls, sending letters, holding meetings in school and undertaking home visits. Schools should provide an initial challenge and attempt to assess the specific barriers affecting the school attendance. It is vital that the school continues to work with and support the student and parents even when a referral to the EIS has been made and an investigation is being conducted.

The EIS conduct criminal investigations under the Criminal Justice legislation, investigations can only be commenced where an offence is suspected and therefore there must be a record of unauthorised absence in the school register.

The school should have undertaken work around the following:

- Ascertain if the child or Parents have any additional needs and if so an assessment of those needs have been undertaken through the Early Help Assessment Framework (EHAF).

- Action plans or support plans developed to meet the needs of the student will be important evidence especially where the parent is not engaging with that plan. Any such plan should be documented and recorded.

- Attempted contact between the home and the school must be recorded and must be varied, regular and multiple e.g. telephone contacts, meetings and home visits etc.

- Written communication with parents should be evidenced and made available when requested. This includes letters, invites to meetings, letters of the outcome of the meeting, minutes of meetings, copies of PSP's etc. Stored copies should be on headed paper and must contain date of issue and signatures.

- Verbal communications with parents should be recorded and made available when requested. This includes chronological records of telephone calls, including voice messages left and received by school and parent.

- If you have an automated messaging service, such as "1st day calling", reports from these will constitute usable evidence.

- Bullying allegations should be dealt with, recorded and evidenced in accordance with the school's behaviour policy. Please note, a copy of any policy may be requested as evidence.

- Child in Need concerns should be addressed by contacting Social Care but the EIS should be advised of those concerns and whether any referral has been made.

- If the child is on a Child Protection Plan, please ensure we are aware of this to enable us to prioritise the case.

- The use of parenting contracts/agreements for absence and behaviour should be considered by schools. It is a useful recording document to record actions agreed between home and school.

- Ensure behaviour events are fully recorded to support any application for a Behaviour Parenting Order by the EIS.

- Where a child has a statement of special educational needs please ensure that review meetings are up to date and evidenced.

- The schools policy on granting leave of absence during term time (previously described as holidays during term time) should be communicated to parents regularly.

Children Missing Education:

- All schools (including academies) must notify the LA of any child who has 10 consecutive un-authorised day's absence if you do not know the child's whereabouts. Or the child is absent from school without school's permission for up to 10 consecutive days. The <u>10 days allows the school a period of time to undertake their own enquiries.</u>

- Once you have undertaken appropriate enquiries, you can refer the child to the EIS. They will agree with you a date for removing from the register. **Do not remove the child from the school roll unless you have confirmation from the EIS.**

- The EIS shall continue with wide enquiries within the LA and across borders. **Providing the child is not located within a reasonable distance of the school,** you may remove from the register on the agreed date. Regulation 8 provides "mandatory circumstances" of which this is one. The mandatory areas apply to **ALL** categories of schools.

- A pupil can only lawfully be deleted from the admission register on the grounds prescribed in regulation 8 of the Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006.

- If a child is on a child protection plan do not wait for the 10 days to elapse before referring, any concerns should be reported to social care immediately.

This is not an exhaustive list; However, to safeguard children and their education, if you are unsure of the referral criteria we recommend you submit a referral or contact us to for a general discussion. Where it does not meet our criteria we will explore the options together and advise you further.

Investigating officers may identify supportive strategies that should have been undertaken as they are likely impact negatively upon possible legal action. These cases will be referred to Senior Education Investigation Officer to discuss these matters further with the school.

Please be aware that if the EIS is to proceed with a prosecution, schools need to respond promptly to requests for evidence and information. Lack of good quality evidence or undue delay is likely to result in a case not being authorised by Worcestershire County Council Legal Services.

Completed referrals:

Complete the referral form and attach any pertinent documentation; forward the referral form with a certified copy of the registration and all supporting documents you have identified to:

Worcestershire County Council
Education Investigation Service
County Hall
Pavilion H2
PO Box 73
Spetchley Road
Worcester
WR5 2NP

Or email to:

edinvservice@worcestershire.gov.uk