

**Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director – Children’s Services**

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>14 January 2022</b>
Subject:	<b>Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Annual Report 2020/21</b>

**Summary:**

This report presents annual data for 2020/21 and commentary on Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and comment on the Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Annual Report for 2020/21.

## 1. Background

This report provides data and information on the attendance of children in schools or educated otherwise. It also reports on children who are missing education i.e. they are not on a school roll or attending regularly including those who are receiving a reduced timetable.

The local authority has a duty under section 436A of the Education Act 1996 to have processes in place to identify children who are not receiving a full time suitable education. Schools have a duty to inform the local authority of children who are removed from the roll of a school by parents to be electively home educated.

Covid-19 resulted in schools closing in January 2021 and reopening to all pupils in March 2021 which resulted in a significant impact on the attendance at school. This is in conjunction with the impact of periods of school closure in 2020. Therefore, some of the data presented in this report is limited to the period in which schools were fully open which is September 2020 until end of December 2020 and March 2021 until the end of the academic year.

The key points from the report are:

- The attendance of children in Lincolnshire schools was, on average, higher than national across the year for all children, for those with an Education, Health and Care Plan and for those with a social worker. This positive result was due to the collaboration of social care, the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) team and the Inclusion and Attendance team in ensuring that our most vulnerable children were contacted and offered support, increasing the chances of them attending school during lockdown if appropriate and when schools fully opened.
- The increase in children being electively home educated (EHE) correlated with the opening and closing of school premises during the pandemic. The expectation for children to return to school in September 2020 resulted in a significant rise in EHE children which steadied when schools closed again in January 2021. Since March 2021 many children have returned to school and whilst numbers remain relatively high, they are on a similar trajectory to the pre-pandemic levels of 2019.
- During 2020/21 there were periods where attendance at schools was statutory and periods when it was not; the use of fixed penalty notices (FPN) and prosecutions for non-attendance reflected this. The FPN's that were issued were for term time holidays. There was and continues to be, no desire to fine or prosecute parents of children who are anxious and not attending during the pandemic period. The introduction of three new processes has meant that the child's holistic needs are considered and addressed where possible, before the school considers a legal route for non-attendance.
- Schools are regularly reminded of the importance of informing the local authority of children who are on a reduced timetable. There are some pupils who have 0 hours attendance due to school refusal and there is an expectation that these children are on the Emotionally Based School Anxiety (EBSA) pathway to ensure they access specialist teams to support the anxiety and the related non-attendance.
- Schools can access a range of support and guidance through the Managing Attendance package, helping them improve attendance at school in line with the recent Department for Education (DfE) expectations.

## **2. Conclusion**

The Committee is invited to review and comment on the annual report attached at Appendix A.

## **3. Consultation**

**a) Risks and Impact Analysis**

Not Applicable

**4. Appendices**

These are listed below and attached at the back of the report	
Appendix A	Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Annual Report 2020/21

**5. Background Papers**

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972 were used in the preparation of this report.

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