



**Open Report on behalf of Heather Sandy, Executive Director - Children's Services**

Report to:	<b>Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee</b>
Date:	<b>12 January 2024</b>
Subject:	<b>Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Annual Report 2022/23</b>

**Summary:**

This report presents data and commentary for the 2022/23 academic year on Lincolnshire school attendance, children who are electively home educated and children who are missing education.

**Actions Required:**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and endorse the Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education Annual Report for 2022/23.

## **1. Background**

This report provides data and information on the attendance of children at school or educated otherwise. It also reports on children who are missing education i.e., they are not on a school roll or are not attending regularly including those children on 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 have been removed from the school roll to be electively home educated.

The key points to raise from the report are:

- Following the launch of the Department for Education (DfE) Working Together to Improve Attendance in 2022, the local authority produced and shared with schools and services, its own improving attendance strategy in Spring 2023. All schools are participating in termly meetings with the local authority to discuss aspects of attendance. The feedback from schools has been positive, reporting

that this approach not only holds them to account but supports them to manage attendance and consider the full range of strategies available to them.

- A range of data is available to schools and the local authority. This data is updated daily and available at pupil level, not only to the attendance team within the local authority but also other service areas. As this is used more regularly, there will be more awareness of attendance, particularly of our priority groups.
- Absences in Lincolnshire have decreased but remain high compared with pre-pandemic years and compared with national data within the secondary phase.
- The number of children on reduced timetables has significantly increased. This increase is not only to support children with medical conditions but potentially also to support behaviour.
- The number of children being removed from school to be electively home educated continued to increase in the last academic year. Whilst the majority are still removed as a result of parental choice to educate their children in an alternative way, the number of parents removing to home educate, due to dissatisfaction with school or difficulty in getting children to attend school, is increasing. A high proportion of these children are often already known to other departments in Children's Services, supporting the quick return to school where appropriate.
- The use of Fixed Penalty Notices (FPN) has returned to similar pre-pandemic levels but principally for term-time holidays. The use of fines and prosecutions to address long term persistent absence has decreased as expected, as every effort is made to provide support back into school rather than take legal action for non-school attendance. A high percentage of families seem resigned to the fact that they will be issued with an FPN for a term time holiday and the reduced cost of the family holiday makes this a viable option. In response to this, the DfE is providing new guidance for schools and Local Authorities on the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices. The new guidance has been out for consultation with local authorities, with the aim of it being in place for September 2024. It is intended to reduce the inconsistency around the issuing of fines, giving clarity and guidance with the aim of having a more consistent approach.

## **2. Conclusion**

The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee is invited to review and endorse the annual report on Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education for 2022/23.

### 3. Consultation

#### a) Risks and Impact Analysis

n/a

### 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 2022/23
Appendix B	Attendance in Schools, Elective Home Education and Children Missing Education data pack 2022/23
Appendix C	Lincolnshire School Attendance Strategy 2023 - 2026

### 5. Background Papers

No background papers within Section 100D of the Local Government Act 172 were used in the preparation of this report.

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