**Education Social Work Service**

Prior to making a referral to the Education Social Work Service there is an expectation that:

1. The school should have an Attendance Policy that reflects the schools ethos regarding school attendance and also the action the school will take to address issues of poor attendance.
2. The child will have attendance below 90% and that there have been at least 10 unauthorised absence sessions in the previous 6 weeks.
3. That a range of interventions including telephone calls, letters, home visits, where appropriate, have been tried in an attempt to resolve the attendance issue. Or in the case of a child and family who have gone missing, that a visit has been undertaken to the last known address.
4. Where the above has been unsuccessful, parents/carers have been invited into school to meet with attendance workers/senior staff, and an attendance plan has been put into place and a date set to review progress.
5. Where necessary, an interpreter has been arranged to communicate with parents.
6. If appropriate, a referral has been considered to another agency eg School Nurse, CAMHS.
7. The referral form has been fully completed, detailing recent interventions, plus copies of relevant documentation relating to the interventions eg letters to parents, attendance plans and minutes of meetings held with parents etc.
8. Any behavioural, learning and family information is provided, as detailed on the referral form.
9. The referral form is signed by the school’s Attendance Leader.
10. Parents have been advised of the referral to ESWS.
11. The number of referrals to the ESWS is in proportion to the schools allocated hours as detailed in the Service Level Agreement.
12. Exceptional acceptance of referrals can be agreed by Area Managers where there are attendance problems but the attendance criteria are not fully met if:
    1. There has been a breakdown in the relationship between the school and parents/carers, and they are refusing to return the child to school or engage in discussion.
    2. There is a request for involvement from Children’s Social Care where there is an identifiable role for the service that cannot be met by other agencies.
13. The ESWS can accept referrals for lates after registration closes where these are recorded as U’s. The usual attendance criteria will apply and the school will be expected to have tried to address the situation with parents/carers. In these cases if legal action is to be considered it would be advisable for schools to allow the recommended thirty minutes before closing registers.
14. The ESWS will only accept referrals relating to non-statutory age during the half term prior to them becoming of statutory school age or they have a school age sibling whose attendance is a cause for concern.
15. Schools should consider using the Children’s Services Holidays in Term Time Penalty Notice Procedures in cases where absence relates to unauthorised leave of absence.

The procedure can be found here: https://bso.bradford.gov.uk/Schools/CMSPage.aspx?mid=370