



Department
for Education

Parental responsibility measures: attendance data collection (PRM-A) 2026

**Guide to the collection of attendance penalty
notices, attendance contracts, parenting
orders and attendance case management**

Version 1.0 April 2026

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Version history

Version	Comments	Date
1.0	<p>Baselined version.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Dates rolled forward.• The following data items are now mandatory for the 2026 collection:<ol style="list-style-type: none">1) Item 1d - number of penalty notices issued to a parent for the same child for a second time within 3 years (at a flat rate of £160)2) Item 7 - number of cases prosecuted due to reaching the limit of 2 penalty notices within 3 years• To provide clarity, further information has been added to this guidance on the data returns for questions 2 and 3• More specific guidance on what data should be included in returns for questions 8-10	April 2026

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

The data collection for attendance penalty notices (PNs), attendance contracts, parenting orders and attendance case management is an annual collection.

Attendance contracts, attendance orders, penalty notices and education supervision orders are interventions available to promote better school attendance.

The PRM-A data collection provides information at local authority level on the volumes of attendance contracts, parenting orders, education supervision orders and penalty notices issued to address poor attendance in school to enable analysis of the effectiveness of these tools.

You are asked to make data return reports on the provisions relating to the use of attendance penalty notices, attendance case management (including fast-track), attendance contracts, parenting orders and education supervision orders by your local authority during the school academic year 2025 to 2026.

The following data items are now **mandatory** for the 2026 collection:

- 1) Item 1d - number of penalty notices issued to a parent for the same child for a second time within 3 years (at a flat rate of £160)
- 2) Item 7 - number of cases prosecuted due to reaching the limit of 2 penalty notices within 3 years

Where schools and the police in your area use the attendance measures, please also include these in your return. In particular, Sections 444A and 444B of the Education Act 1996 give head teachers and police officers the power to issue penalty notices and they must send copies to the local authority. We therefore expect local authorities to include these in their data returns to avoid under reporting on usage.

This data collection covers the school year **1 September 2025 to 31 August 2026**.

Data should be loaded by **Friday 2 October 2026** to allow for cleaning and authorisation by DfE. The final deadline for submission of PRM-A data to the DfE by local authorities is **Friday 16 October 2026**.

All local authorities are expected to provide the data by the deadline above.

1.2. Scope of the PRM-A data collection

This section provides details on the types of local authority attendance improvement tools included within the PRM-A data collection.

Penalty notices

Penalty notices can be issued for section 444(1) offences under the Education Act 1996. Penalty notices can only be issued to parents of pupils who were of compulsory school age (5 to 16) at the time of the alleged offence. Every local authority must draw up a local code of conduct for issuing penalty notices; this code will set out the occasions when it will be appropriate to issue a penalty notice. The deadline for a parent to pay a penalty in accordance with a penalty notice is 28 days. If a penalty is unpaid after 28 days, the local authority must withdraw the notice and decide whether to prosecute the parent for the offence under section 444 (failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance).

Withdrawal provisions for penalty notices

The Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007 set out the circumstances in which a penalty notice issued under section 444(1) can be withdrawn. The PRM-A data collection breaks down the possible reasons for withdrawal into the following categories:

- the penalty notice has been issued outside of the terms of the local code of conduct (Q4a);
- the penalty notice ought not to have been issued or issued to the person named as the recipient (Q4b);
- the penalty notice contains material errors (Q4c); or
- where after the expiry of 28 days the penalty notice is unpaid, and the local authority has neither started legal proceedings nor wishes to take such action under section 444 (Q4d).

Local authority local codes should contain the grounds for withdrawal. Local authorities should not issue penalty notices unless they are willing to prosecute parents for the original offence of failing to secure their child's regular school attendance following non-payment.

Please read Chapter 6 of the [statutory guidance: Working together to improve school attendance](#) for further information.

Parenting orders

Local authorities can request a parenting order following a successful prosecution of parents for offences under sections 444(1) or 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, for irregular school attendance. The courts can grant a parenting order as an ancillary order.

Parenting orders are imposed by the court and consist of two elements:

(i) parent must attend a parenting programme or counselling for up to three months; and

(ii) parent must comply with any other requirements that the court deem is necessary. This element can last for up to 12 months.

Requirements of attendance contracts

The law allows local authorities and schools to enter into an attendance contract¹ with parents in respect of school attendance. Section 19 of the Anti-Social Behaviour Act 2003 sets out that the contract is a written agreement between a parent and either the local authority or the governing body of a school and must contain both:

a) a statement by the parent that they agree to comply for a specified period with whatever requirements are specified in the contract; and

b) a statement by the local authority or governing body agreeing to provide support to the parent for the purpose of complying with the contract.

The contract is voluntary. It is a two-way agreement between the school /local authority and a parent and support must be provided which can include parenting skills classes /counselling/referral to other agencies for help/support.

If Pastoral Support Plans and Individual Education Plans are arranged to address pupils' poor attendance and have a parenting support element to them (i.e. the parent is offered specific support as detailed above by either the school/local authority) then these should be included in your return as an attendance contract. However, if such plans do not offer any support to the parent and addresses only the pupils' needs then these should not be included in your returns as an attendance contract.

Education supervision orders

Local authorities must consider applying for an Education Supervision Order (ESO) before prosecuting parents. A local authority may apply for an ESO instead of or as well as prosecuting parents. The order is made in respect of the child and the local authority is appointed by the court to supervise that child's education, either at a school or at home, for a specified period of time.

¹ In this guidance "attendance contract" means a parenting contract entered into under section 19(2) of the Anti-social Behaviour Act 2003.

Attendance case management – support work with pupils and parents

Local authorities should use this category to record any support work with pupils and parents expected by the statutory *guidance Working together to improve school attendance*. Depending on available data, this can include both: any early intervention work with pupils and parents, including cases where the local authority has worked with the school to support a pupil (but not been the lead practitioner), and also cases where a local authority team has held the case as the lead practitioner. Each case recorded should represent a specific agreed approach to tackle a pupil's absence problems (whether authorised or unauthorised).

LAs record and collect different data on support and therefore the examples below are illustrative of what may be included if the data is available:

- Cases where advice has been provided to a school on an individual case (either through the termly meeting or otherwise) and/or the LA has taken action(s) informally,
- Where an action plan has been agreed for a persistently or severely absent pupil that has involved action(s) for an LA team(s) (regardless of who is acting as lead practitioner),
- Any cases where an LA team have acted as lead practitioner and held a case for supportive work to improve a pupil's attendance (including casework in the attendance support team or where another team or service has held the case)

Where attendance and early help case management are recorded in the same system and the data is available it could also include cases:

- Where an early help plan has been agreed that included a pupil's attendance at school.

This list is not exhaustive, and returns can encompass other local processes that incorporate similar features to those described.

1.3. Data protection & security

Data kept on pupils (in any medium, including within a MIS) are personal data. The data must be managed in accordance with the requirements of the UK General Data Protection Regulation (UK GDPR) and Data Protection Act 2018. All staff that have access to personal data should be aware of their responsibilities under the acts. Local authorities should advise schools about their responsibility to hold data in line with the acts.

1.4. Data quality

It is important that the data collected by local authorities, for onward transmission to the department, is both accurate and complete. In Section 2, there is a complete list of data items that need to be submitted, together with an explanation of each of them.

2. Data required

This section explains the data that should be submitted under each question set out in the data collection.

Please include any relevant data provided to you by schools, including the numbers of attendance contracts offered and those that were accepted by parents/carers and cases entering and leaving attendance case management at school level.

Although we do not collect data regarding attendance contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices in cases of behaviour/exclusions, local authorities should continue to keep such data for their own records in case of court action.

Further information on all the legal measures is available in the [statutory guidance: parental responsibility measures for behaviour and attendance](#) on the gov.uk website.

2.1. Explanation of measures

See [Appendix 1](#) for a full list of the questions contained in the data collection exercise.

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

Question 1 is asking for the total number of penalty notices for unauthorised absence that were issued during the period. The figures provided should include where a penalty notice is issued in relation to pupils attending an alternative provision such as pupil referral unit and who fail to attend that provision.

Questions 1a to 1c asks for the total number of penalty notices issued by main reason, including: unauthorised holiday absence, late arrival, and other unauthorised circumstances.

This question aims to capture the main reason for issuing penalty notices.

Where there is a single reason for issuing the penalty notice, please record in the appropriate total. Where there is a combination of reasons, please consider the greatest cause of unauthorised absence and record it in the appropriate total. If it is difficult to identify a single greatest cause (for example, because there are two equally contributory factors leading to the unauthorised absence), record the cause deemed to be the deciding factor in the penalty notice being issued and record this in the appropriate total. The deciding factor could be the reason that caused the penalty notice to be issued at that time.

For example, if a pupil had 9 sessions of late arrival and 1 session of other unauthorised circumstances, then the greatest cause of unauthorised absence would be late arrival; this would be the main reason for issuing the penalty notice and should be recorded in the 'Arriving late' total.

In another example, a pupil had 5 sessions of late arrival after the register closes, and 5 sessions of unauthorised holiday, where neither is greater in volume. However, the unauthorised holiday occurred last and was the main reason for the school issuing a penalty notice at this time. Since the deciding factor was the holiday, this should be recorded in the 'Unauthorised holiday' total.

Where there is another reason not in the list above then please record these cases in the 'other' total.

The sum of the figures provided for questions 1a to 1c should add up to the total number of penalty notices for unauthorised absence issued in the period as indicated in question 1.

Question 1d asks, of the total number of penalty notices issued during the period in Question 1, the number issued to a parent for the same child for a second time within 3 years (at a flat rate of £160).

Question 2 is asking, of the penalty notices issued during the period only, the number that were paid within 21 days of a penalty notice for unauthorised absence being issued. This refers to first penalty notices only, issued during the period, that were paid within 21 days and therefore at the reduced rate. Do not include second penalty notices paid within 21 days in data provided for question 2. This is to differentiate between the number of first penalty notices paid at the reduced rate vs the number paid at the standard rate.

Question 3 asks, of the penalty notices issued during the period only, the total number of first and second penalty notices paid at the standard rate: There are:

- The number of first penalty notices that were paid on days 22-28 after issue and
- the number of second penalty notices that were paid within 28 days.

All second penalty notices that have been paid (as counted in Question 1d) and paid, should be included under Question 3. First Penalty notices paid on days 22-28 only should be included here. This separation is to differentiate between the number of penalty notices issued that have been paid at the reduced rate vs the standard rate.

Note that if a penalty is unpaid after 28 days the local authority must withdraw the notice and decide whether to prosecute the parent for the offence under section 444 (failing to ensure their child's regular school attendance).

Question 4 relates to withdrawals of penalty notices issued during the period only for unauthorised absence. Question 4 asks for the total number of penalty notices that were withdrawn during the period, with questions 4a to 4d asking for the total numbers of penalty notices withdrawn by main reason including: issued outside local code of conduct, ought not to have been issued or wrong recipient, contains material errors, unpaid after 28 days and no legal proceedings. .

The sum of the figures provided for questions 4a to 4d inclusive should add up to the total number of penalty notices withdrawn in the period as indicated in question 4.

Question 5 is asking for the number of cases prosecuted following non-payment of a penalty notice issued during the period only. The figure provided should include the number of summons served for unauthorised absence.

Question 6 is asking for the total number of unresolved cases at the end of the period (i.e. those penalty notices not falling into the paid, withdrawn or prosecuted category by the end of the period). This may include penalty notices issued near the end of the academic year that were not resolved before the end of the academic year. The total of Q2-Q6 inclusive should equal the figure provided in Q1.

Question 7 is asking for the number of cases prosecuted during the period due to reaching the limit of 2 penalty notices within 3 years and then meeting the national threshold for a third time (or subsequent times) within those 3 years.

Attendance case management relating to absence from school

Questions 8 to 10 cover all cases where the LA has been involved providing support to schools in cases of poor attendance in line with Working together to improve school attendance. We recognise that LAs are collecting different information and in different ways, so the below suggestions for inclusion are for illustrative purposes only.

Question 8 should include, where possible, data on cases where formal support for attendance has been provided. This can include where advice has been provided by the local authority on an individual case during targeting support meetings and official actions taken/ support provided by the school, or where a local authority team has held the case as the lead practitioner. It also includes:

- where an action plan has been agreed for a persistently or severely absent pupil that has involved action(s) for an LA team(s) (regardless of who is acting as lead practitioner)
- Any cases where an LA team have acted as lead practitioner and held a case for supportive work to improve a pupil's attendance (including casework in the attendance support team or where another team or service has held the case)

If an attendance contract is offered as part of the attendance case management process, then please record this at questions 14 and 15 as appropriate. For LAs still calling their support work 'fast track casework', please continue to record under this question.

Question 9 refers to the number of parents prosecuted (so, for example, where you bring a prosecution against both parents for a child's unauthorised absence, record '2'). The figure in question 9 (total number of cases prosecuted during the period) should refer to the number of attendance case management cases heard in court following provision of support work. Only include cases opened in the period.

Question 10 should include data on parents that left the attendance case management process having been case managed at either a school or local authority level. Please also remember to complete the reasons for withdrawal as set out in questions 10a and 10b. Only include cases opened in the period.

Parenting orders for unauthorised absence

Question 11 should include the total number of parenting orders made by the courts following either a section 444(1) or 444(1A) prosecution.

Question 12 is asking about the number of parenting orders that were implemented.

Question 13 should include the total number of parenting orders not implemented during this period. This should identify the reasons why there may be a discrepancy between questions 11 and 12.

Question 13a should include parenting orders where the counselling or guidance programme has not begun within 6 months of the order being made due to a lack of the necessary parenting provision within the local authority. However, **do not** include details of parenting orders that cannot be implemented during the statistical period because a parenting programme does not start until the next statistical period, but include it in your next return.

Question 13b - should include parenting orders that could not be implemented because of breach by the parent.

The sum of the figures provided for questions 13a and 13b should add up to the total number of parenting orders not implemented during the period as indicated in question 13.

Attendance contracts for unauthorised absence

Question 14 should include the total number of attendance contracts offered within the period within the local authority area, which includes those offered by schools. However, it should only include cases where a parent has formally been offered a attendance contract. Please only count cases where a contract has been offered in a face-to-face meeting with the parent.

Question 15 should record the number of attendance contracts that were accepted by the parents and again should include those offered by either the local authority or schools. The figure provided for question 15 should not be greater than the figure provided in question 14.

Education supervision orders

Question 16 is asking for the total number of education supervision orders issued in the period, with questions 16a and 16b asking for the total number of education orders issued instead of prosecution or in conjunction with prosecution.

The sum of the figures provided for questions 16a and 16b should add up to the total number of education supervision orders issued in the period as indicated in question 16.

Education supervision orders issued means those made by the Court.

3. How to make a return

This section provides information about the process of submitting your data to the department.

3.1. Collection dates

Key collection dates are:

- data collection opens on Wednesday 2 September 2026
- data should be loaded by Friday 2 October 2026
- data collection closes on Friday 16 October 2026

You can only make a return during this period. No amendments can be made to your return after the collection closes on 16 October 2026.

3.2. COLLECT

You should submit your data using COLLECT, our centralised data collection and management system. A separate [COLLECT guide](#) is available to help you use the system to complete and submit your return.

You will not be able to submit your return in COLLECT if it contains validation errors. These must be corrected before the 'submit' button becomes available (COLLECT will alert you to any fields where errors have been identified).

You will still be able to submit your data where queries are present, although these must be accompanied by an explanatory note. You may save your data and return to it later, as long as you have not pressed the submit button. If you find that you are having problems submitting your data, please contact us by using the [data collections service request form](#) .

3.3. DfE Sign-in

Username and passwords for COLLECT are managed by the [DfE Sign-in](#) system that has replaced the secure access system. Your local authority has a delegated approver(s) who can allocate you access to departmental systems that use DfE Sign-in. If you require access to the PRMA 2026 data collection on COLLECT, please contact the approver(s) in your local authority.

3.4. Further information

For further advice on the completion of any part of the PRM-A collection or on the use of COLLECT, local authorities should contact the Data Operations Service Desk by completing a [data collections service request form](#).

Appendix 1: Questions in the PRM-A data collection

Penalty notices for unauthorised absence

1. Total number of penalty notices for unauthorised absences issued during the period

Main reason for issue of penalty notices

- 1a. Total number of penalty notices by main reason: unauthorised family holiday absence
- 1b. Total number of penalty notices by main reason: late arrival
- 1c. Total number of penalty notices by main reason: other unauthorised circumstances

Repeated penalty notices

- 1d. Of the total number of penalty notices issued during the period (Q1), the number issued to a parent of the same child for a second time within 3 years (at a flat rate of £160)

Payment of penalty notices

2. During the period, the number of penalty notices paid within 21 days
3. During the period, the number of penalty notices paid between 22- 28 days

Withdrawal of penalty notices

4. During the period, the total number of penalty notices withdrawn

Reasons for the withdrawal of penalty notices

- 4.a. The number of penalty notices withdrawn as the penalty notice was issued outside the terms of the local code of conduct
- 4.b. The number of penalty notices withdrawn as they ought not to have been issued or issued to the person named as recipient
- 4.c. The number of penalty notices withdrawn as it appears that notice contains material errors
- 4.d. The number of penalty notices withdrawn as after expiry of 28 days, penalty is unpaid and LA does not wish to bring legal proceedings

Prosecutions relating to unpaid penalty notices

5. During the period, the number of cases prosecuted following non-payment

Unresolved penalty notices

6. Number of unresolved penalty notices at the end of the period (i.e. penalty notices not falling into the paid, withdrawn or prosecuted category by the end of the period)

Prosecutions where penalty notice limit has been reached

7. Number of cases prosecuted during the period due to reaching the limit of 2 penalty notices within 3 years

Attendance case management relating to absence from school

8. Total number of cases entering attendance case management during the period.

9. Total number of attendance case management cases prosecuted during the period. [Only include cases opened in the period]

10. Total number of attendance case management cases withdrawn, before prosecution, during the period. [Only include cases opened in the period]

Reasons for withdrawal of Attendance case management cases

10.a. Total number of attendance case management cases withdrawn because attendance improved following the support measures.

10.b. Total number of attendance case management cases withdrawn for another reason.

10.c. Please specify the reason for those cases withdrawn for another reason in Q10b

Parenting orders for unauthorised absence

11. Total number of parenting orders granted following unauthorised absence prosecution (ancillary orders) within the period

12. Total number of parenting orders implemented following unauthorised absence prosecution within the period

13. Total number of parenting orders not implemented following unauthorised absence prosecution within the period

Reasons for not implementing parenting orders

13.a. Total number of parenting orders not implemented due to a lack of provision

13.b. Total number of parenting orders not implemented due to a breach by a parent

Attendance contracts for unauthorised absence

14. Number of attendance contracts offered within the LA following unauthorised absence within the period
15. Number of attendance contracts offered in Q14 that were accepted by parent

Education Supervision Orders

16. Total number of education supervision orders issued during the period
- 16.a. Total number of education supervision orders issued during the period in place of prosecution
- 16.b. Total number of education supervision orders issued during the period in addition to prosecution



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