**Guidance on the Use of the Notice to Improve (NTI)**

**Purpose and Context**

The Notice to Improve (NTI) process was introduced as part of the statutory framework outlined in Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024). It is intended as an early intervention tool to address emerging attendance concerns where the pupil does not present with complex needs.

**Definition of Complex Needs**

Pupils with complex needs may include, but are not limited to:
- Those open to statutory social care services
- Pupils with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)
- Pupils on long-term reduced or part-time timetables
- Pupils with entrenched and persistent patterns of non-attendance

While the NTI may still be applicable in such cases, it is strongly advised that schools first consult with the pupil’s allocated social worker, SEN caseworker, or a member of the Legal Intervention Team (LIT). Schools can request this support via the Mendix ‘Ask for Advice’ form. This consultation should take place prior to issuing an NTI.

**Threshold for Issuing a Notice to Improve**

The Local Authority recommends that an NTI be considered when a pupil has accrued a minimum of 10 unauthorised absences (code O/U) within the last 100 sessions, but before reaching 30 unauthorised absences. The NTI is designed to act as a short-term, preventative measure to halt further deterioration in attendance. If a pupil’s attendance has already reached the threshold for persistent absence, a referral to the LIT should be prioritised over issuing an NTI.

**Use of the Local Authority NTI Template**

The LA has developed a standardised NTI template that includes all statutory elements required for compliance, as well as an [exemplar](https://view.officeapps.live.com/op/view.aspx?src=https%3A%2F%2Fhias-moodle.mylearningapp.com%2Fpluginfile.php%2F5037%2Fmod_resource%2Fcontent%2F1%2FSAST25%2520-%2520Notice%2520to%2520Improve%2520Template%2520-%2520Letter.docx&wdOrigin=BROWSELINK) containing some practical examples of support. Schools are expected to use this template or ensure that any alternative version includes all mandatory information.

The NTI must clearly document the following four stages of prior intervention:
1. Telephone contact with the parent/carer
2. Written communication outlining concerns
3. A formal meeting with the parent/carer
4. Offer of practical support to address barriers to attendance

These steps must be completed before the pupil reaches 30 unauthorised absences within the last 100 sessions. The NTI should formalise the outcomes of the meeting and clearly set out expectations for improvement.

The NTI template can be found on the [HIAS Moodle](https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com)

**Monitoring Period and Re-Issuance**

- The NTI must allow a minimum of 3 weeks for improvement and should not exceed 6 weeks.
- If attendance improves but subsequently declines, a new NTI must be issued. NTIs cannot be reactivated or extended beyond the original monitoring period.
- A third NTI is not recommended. In such cases, a referral to the LIT should be made.

**Non-Engagement by Parents/Carers**

If a parent/carer fails to engage with the offer of a meeting, this must be clearly recorded on the NTI. The school should document:
- The date and time of the proposed meeting
- The support that would have been offered had the meeting taken place

**Consideration of Parental Responsibility**

When issuing an NTI and any subsequent Penalty Notice, schools must carefully consider who holds legal parental responsibility. Non-resident parents who have made reasonable efforts to engage may not be held liable. If there is any uncertainty, schools should seek advice from the Penalty Notice Team via [Mendix.](https://educationforms.apps.hants.gov.uk/p/school-forms)

**Evidencing Support and Legal Implications**

It is essential that schools maintain clear and comprehensive records of all support offered. The NTI may lead to a Penalty Notice and form part of the legal evidence in any subsequent prosecution. Under Section 183 of [Working together to improve school attendance (applies from 19 August 2024)](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/66bf300da44f1c4c23e5bd1b/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance_-_August_2024.pdf), the Local Authority retains the final decision on whether sufficient support has been provided prior to issuing a Penalty Notice.