



Department  
for Education

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Policy paper

# 2010 to 2015 government policy: school behaviour and attendance

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## Contents

[Issue](#)

[Actions](#)

[Background](#)

[Who we've consulted](#)

[Bills and legislation](#)

This is a copy of a document that stated a policy of the 2010 to 2015 Conservative and Liberal Democrat coalition government.

The previous URL of this page was

<https://www.gov.uk/government/policies/improving-behaviour-and-attendance-in-schools>. Current policies can be found at the

[↑Contents](#)

## Issue

We want to make sure that teachers have the necessary powers to maintain order in the classroom. It is unacceptable that poor pupil behaviour is the greatest concern of new teachers and a common reason why experienced teachers leave the profession.

We need to make sure school staff are confident about their responsibilities and feel supported when dealing with behaviour and attendance issues. We also want to reinforce the importance of regular school attendance.

## Actions

To make sure teachers have the necessary powers to maintain discipline, we are:

- giving staff stronger powers to search pupils
- removing the requirement to give parents 24 hours' written notice of detentions after school
- clarifying teachers' power to use reasonable force
- giving staff simplified advice on:
  - preventing and dealing with bullying
  - identifying and supporting pupils whose behaviour suggests they may have unmet mental health needs
- enforcing new rules around independent review panels to prevent them from overruling schools' decisions on permanent exclusions

To improve attendance in schools, we are:

- providing staff with revised advice on school attendance
- tightening regulations on term-time holidays
- increasing the penalty notice fine levels for school attendance and shortening the deadline to pay the fines

We also propose to introduce legislation giving academies the power to prosecute parents in relation to school attendance.

## Background

### Behaviour

In the schools white paper [‘The importance of teaching’](#), we set out our commitment to give teachers more powers to deal with disruptive behaviour in school.

As a result, on 4 April 2011 we announced simplified guidance setting out the roles and responsibilities of teachers, heads and governing bodies.

Following a public consultation on the guidance, we published a series of guidance documents to support staff in maintaining good behaviour in schools. These included:

- [‘Behaviour and discipline in schools: guidance for governing bodies’](#)
- [‘Screening, searching and confiscation: advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies’](#)
- [‘Behaviour and discipline in schools: a guide for headteachers and school staff’](#)

- [‘Preventing and tackling bullying: advice for school leaders, staff and governing bodies’](#)
- [‘Use of reasonable force: advice for headteachers, staff and governing bodies’](#)

The government’s expert adviser on behaviour, Charlie Taylor, also produced a [checklist on the basics of classroom management](#). Teachers can use the checklist to develop the essential actions that encourage good behaviour in students.

In September 2012 we introduced a new system of independent review panels that took away the ability to overrule schools’ decisions on permanent exclusion. We also published [‘Exclusion from maintained schools, academies and pupil referral units in England’](#), which provides updated statutory guidance to schools and local authorities on excluding pupils.

In February 2014, we updated our [advice on behaviour and discipline in schools](#) to outline for schools a range of tough but proportionate sanctions they can use to discipline pupils and to stress the importance of praise and rewards to encourage good behaviour.

In March 2014 we published [‘Supporting children and young people who are bullied: advice for schools’](#), which outlines schools’ responsibilities to support children who are bullied. This supplements our advice for school leaders, staff and governors on preventing and tackling bullying.

In March 2014, we published a series of [case studies showing good practice examples of schools who deal with bullying effectively](#).

In June 2014 we published [advice for schools on identifying and supporting pupils whose behaviour suggests they may have unmet mental health needs](#).

## Attendance

The Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, asked Charlie Taylor to conduct a review of school attendance. On 16 April 2012, he published the report [‘Improving attendance in schools’](#). The report sets out his recommendations to reduce school absences. We accepted the majority of Mr Taylor’s recommendations.

On 22 February 2013, we published [‘Advice on schools attendance’](#), which provides schools and local authorities with guidance on maintaining high levels of school attendance and on planning the school day and year.

## Who we’ve consulted

The consultation [‘Ensuring good behaviour in schools: guidance for governing bodies, headteachers, school staff and employers’](#) ran from 4 April to 30 May 2011. The responses to the consultation helped us formulate the revised guidance introduced in March 2012.

The consultation [‘Advice on school attendance matters’](#) ran from 1 November to 13 December 2012. It sought the views of governing bodies, headteachers, school staff, police officers, local authority officers and parents on:

- revised guidance on pupil registers and attendance codes and the school day and year
- statutory guidance on education-related parenting contracts, parenting orders and penalty notices



The consultation received 82 responses.

## Bills and legislation

Teachers' powers to discipline pupils are outlined in the following:

- sections 90, 91 and 92 of the [Education and Inspections Act 2006](#) give detail on statutory powers such as issuing detentions and to confiscating inappropriate items
- section 93 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines the statutory power to use reasonable force to control or restrain pupils
- section 550ZA of the [Education Act 1996](#) and the [Schools \(specification and Disposal of Articles\) Regulations 2012](#) give teachers the power to search pupils without consent for a number of 'prohibited items'



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