

Strategic Approach to Attendance

Effective attendance practice applies consistent, evidence-informed principles flexibly to meet the needs of pupils and families.

The Education Endowment Foundation identifies six key areas that support this approach.

1. BUILD A CULTURE THAT PROMOTES ATTENDANCE

Strategic Intent:

Attendance is embedded within the school's ethos, curriculum design and daily practice, with clear messaging that every day matters, while recognising individual pupil needs.

Key Practice:

Attendance promoted as a shared responsibility across staff, pupils and families.

Attendance explicitly linked to:

- wellbeing
- safeguarding
- engagement
- preparation for adulthood

Positive routines, consistency and predictable structures across the school day

Celebration of improved and sustained attendance, not just 100%

2. DEVELOP CLEAR CONSISTENT POLICIES AND SYSTEMS

Strategic Intent:

Attendance expectations and responses are transparent, lawful, SEND-informed and consistently applied.

Key Practice:

A clear Attendance Policy, understood by staff and families.

Lawful, time-limited use of:

- part-time timetables
- phased returns
- flexible start arrangements

Clear first-day response and follow-up procedures

Strong links between attendance, safeguarding and SEND policies

Individual pupil attendance data shared with parents & carers at every EHCP review meeting, ensuring transparency and supporting collaborative approaches to improving attendance.

3. USE DATA TO UNDERSTAND PATTERNS AND DIRECT SUPPORT

Strategic Intent:

Attendance data is used diagnostically to understand *why* pupils are absent and to deploy support early.

Key Practice:

Daily monitoring with narrative understanding

Analysis by:

- cohort
- patterns (e.g. transitions, specific days)

Attendance discussions focus on trends, triggers and barriers

Data shared regularly with SLT to discuss intervention strategies

Data shared regularly with governors with contextual explanation

4. BUILD STRONG RELATIONSHIPS WITH FAMILIES

Strategic Intent:

We work in partnership with families, framing attendance as a supportive process rather than a punitive one.

Key Practice:

Early conversations focused on understanding barriers

Attendance meetings centred on problem-solving and trust-building

Clear communication about:

- expectations
- support available
- shared responsibilities

Flexible approaches to engagement where families experience difficulty

Individual pupil attendance data shared with parents & carers during every EHCP review meeting, creating a clear and consistent process that strengthens communication and supports joint action to improve attendance.

5. TARGET SUPPORT EARLY USING A GRADUATED RESPONSE

Strategic Intent:

Attendance concerns are addressed promptly through a graduated, SEND-appropriate response.

Key Practice:

Graduated Response (Appendix 1) Summary:

- **Universal:** strong routines, inclusive curriculum, predictable environments
- **Targeted:** attendance plans, key adult support, adjustments to routines
- **Intensive:** multi-agency involvement, bespoke timetables, reintegration plans

6. WORK WITH EXTERNAL PARTNERS AND AGENCIES

Strategic Intent:

Attendance improvement is strengthened through coordinated multi-agency working.

Key Practice:

Regular liaison with:

- Local Authority attendance services
- SEND teams
- health and mental health professionals

Clear evidence of support offered prior to escalation.

Leadership, Roles and Accountability

A named **Attendance Lead (Senior Leader)** holds strategic oversight

Attendance reviewed regularly by:

- SLT
- Governing Body

Staff training ensures all adults understand:

- their role in promoting attendance
- trauma-informed and SEND-aware practice
- consistent language and expectations

Measuring Impact

Impact is measured through:

- Improved engagement and sustained reintegration
- Reduction in persistent and severe absence over time
- Improved wellbeing and readiness to learn
- Positive family engagement and trust

Attendance percentages are considered **alongside individual context and progress**.

Next Steps and Review

Ongoing refinement based on:

- attendance data
- pupil and family voice
- external guidance updates

Annual review of attendance strategy

Appendix 1: Graduated, Support First Pathway

Purpose

This pathway sets out how we prevent absence, identify emerging concerns and provide proportionate, timely support for pupils and families. It should be read alongside our Attendance Policy, SEND Policy, Safeguarding Policy, and the DfE guidance Working together to improve school attendance (Aug 2024)

Universal (all pupils) – promote, prevent, prepare

- Predictable routines; trauma-informed, autism-aware and sensory-considerate practice.
- Daily welcome and check-in systems; swift first-day response; positive reinforcement of improved patterns.
- Accessible communication with families; translated/alternative formats if needed; clear expectations and support offers.
- Inclusive curriculum and therapeutic offers; reasonable adjustments; transport/arrival planning where required.
- Systematic monitoring of patterns (day/time/trigger), with staff alerted to early dips.

Targeted (emerging concern) – listen, understand, adapt

- Joint problem-solving meeting with family to understand barriers (health, anxiety/EBSA, sensory, transport, care).
- Short, written Attendance Support Plan with clear goals, adjustments and review date (typically 3–4 weeks).
- Key adult/mentor; timetable tweaks; safe spaces; arrival window; phased build-up of time on site.
- Evidence-informed strategies agreed (e.g., graded exposure for EBSA), with staff briefed on consistent approaches.
- Data and narrative recorded: what's helping; what's not; next small steps

Intensive (persistent/severe absence) – coordinate, personalise, review

- Multi-agency meeting (e.g., LA attendance, SEND casework, health/MH, social care) to cohere support and remove barriers.
- Bespoke reintegration timetable, time-limited and reviewed frequently; remote or off-site elements only where appropriate and quality-assured.
- Consider early help, reasonable adjustments to transport/care, and targeted interventions
- Clear criteria for stepping down or escalating; document offers of support prior to any statutory routes

Legal and safeguarding notes

- Part-time timetables are exceptional, time-limited, and reviewed; decisions and rationale are recorded and shared.
- Pupils with medical needs receive additional support; attendance coding and evidence follow DfE rules; safeguarding is paramount.
- All actions logged; reasonable adjustments evidenced; enforcement considered only after support-first pathways are exhausted (unless risk dictates).