Improving Attendance Toolkit

October 2023



School-Home Support

Contents

Welcome

- Our Model: Impact and Approach
- School-Home Support Theory of Change
- The New Guidance

Part 1: The Key Elements

1. Expect:

a. Attendance Policy
b. Target Setting and Whole School Targets
c. Whole School Assembly

Joining it all together:

d. Building a culture of good attendance
e. Key messages

2. Monitor:

a. Daily Monitoring

Joining it all together:

b. Patterns of attendance/non-attendance

3. Listen and Understand:

a. Tips for Talking to Families
b. Possible Defences

Joining it all together:

c. Professionals Understanding of Non-Attendance
d. Root Causes and Theory of Action
e. Non-Violent Communication
f. Cultural Competency
g. ACEs

4. Facilitate Support:

a. Universal Strategies
b. Family Engagement

Joining it all together:

c. Facilitate Support

5. Formalise Support

a. Targeted and Intensive Support

6. Enforce:

a. Statutory Interventions and Legal Action

Joining it all together:

b. Legal Action

Part 2: Resources

- Effective School Attendance Improvement and Management
- Contextual Safeguarding

Welcome

1 in 7 children in England are persistently absent from school each year - missing weeks, months, even years of their education and severely affecting their future life chances.

School leaders know more than most that there are no silver bullets or quick fixes to solving high levels of absence. Tackling the school attendance crisis will require a huge multi-agency approach over a sustained period of time. Schools should not be left to tackle this crisis alone.

School-Home Support is a national charity that works through schools to help young people improve their attendance. Since 1984, we have used early intervention and a whole family approach to break intergenerational cycles of deprivation and low aspiration. Partnering through schools, our expert practitioners work one-to-one with families to establish long term trusting relationships that strengthen the bridge between home and school.

In response to high levels of high absence, the Department for Education (DfE) issued new guidance entitled Working Together to Improve School Attendance with the aim of helping schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities work together to maintain high levels of school attendance. It helpfully clarifies expectations and responsibilities of joint working at a local level.

We welcome the guidance and the value it places on improving attendance through a support-led approach. The Guidance is non-statutory which means schools can be working towards these expectations, rather than already meeting them.

The aim of this toolkit is to help school leaders who want to develop their school attendance policy and practice, particularly in relation to building strong relationships with families to understand and tackle barriers to good attendance.

Our Model: Impact and Approach

School-Home Support works with young people and their families to improve school attendance by breaking down the barriers to education. Our whole family support model has been recognised nationally. We are campaigning for more schools to have the funding and expertise to deliver whole family support.



Last year we delivered the following impact:

- 63% of pupils supported by a School-Home Support Practitioner improved their attendance after 9 months of support.
- The average attendance increase for these pupils was 7.8%, which equates to **15** more days in school
- 70% of the persistently absent children we worked with spent an average of **32** more days in school

Our 2021/2022 Impact Report is available to view and download here on the School-Home Support website.

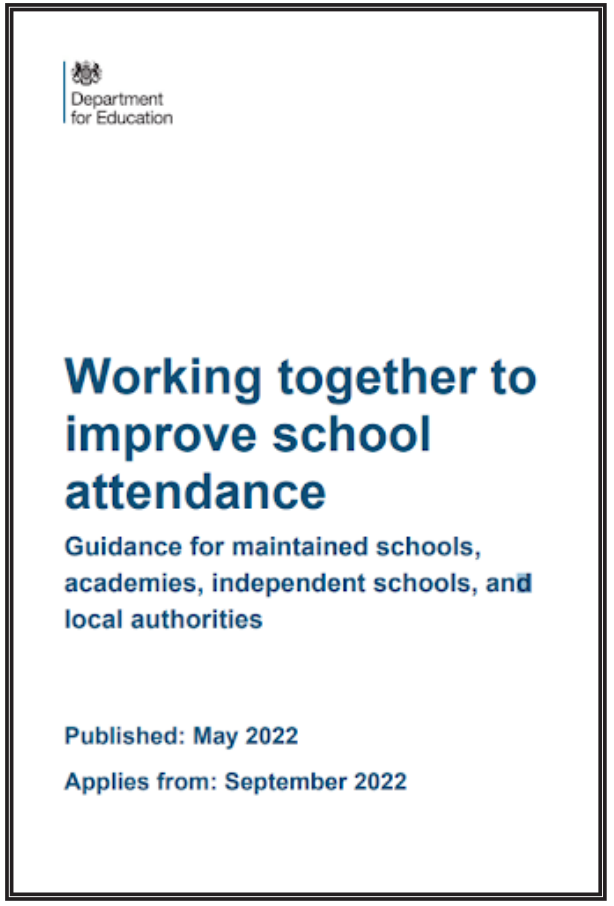
The School-Home Support Theory of Change

Our Theory of Change sits at the heart of everything we do, and helps us to identify the activities that we are delivering and the outcomes that we aim to achieve. We use this to clarify the short term impact we have on children and families, whilst also identifying the longer term outcomes.



The New Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance

- The new Working Together To Improve School Attendance guidance was introduced in September 2022 for all schools, academies, trusts and local authorities, so it is important that your school is prepared and ready to make any changes necessary.
- The new guidance speaks more about a holistic approach to attendance, ensuring that all parties are coordinating wrap around support for the whole family to address the wider issues of non-attendance.
- **This toolkit details the main areas of the new guidance and gives theoretical and practical advice and support to educational settings who are ready to take on the challenge of further improving the attendance of their pupils.**



Key takeaways from the new guidance

- Schools and LAs must work together with students whose attendance is below 50%
- Named LA person for each school
- More holistic in its approach
- Legal action can still be taken

Part 1: The Key Elements

There are six key elements to the new guidance and these will be explored individually within this toolkit. The elements flow into each other and are a **hierarchy of escalating need.**

EXPECT
Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.

MONITOR
Rigorously use attendance to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.

LISTEN AND UNDERSTAND
When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.

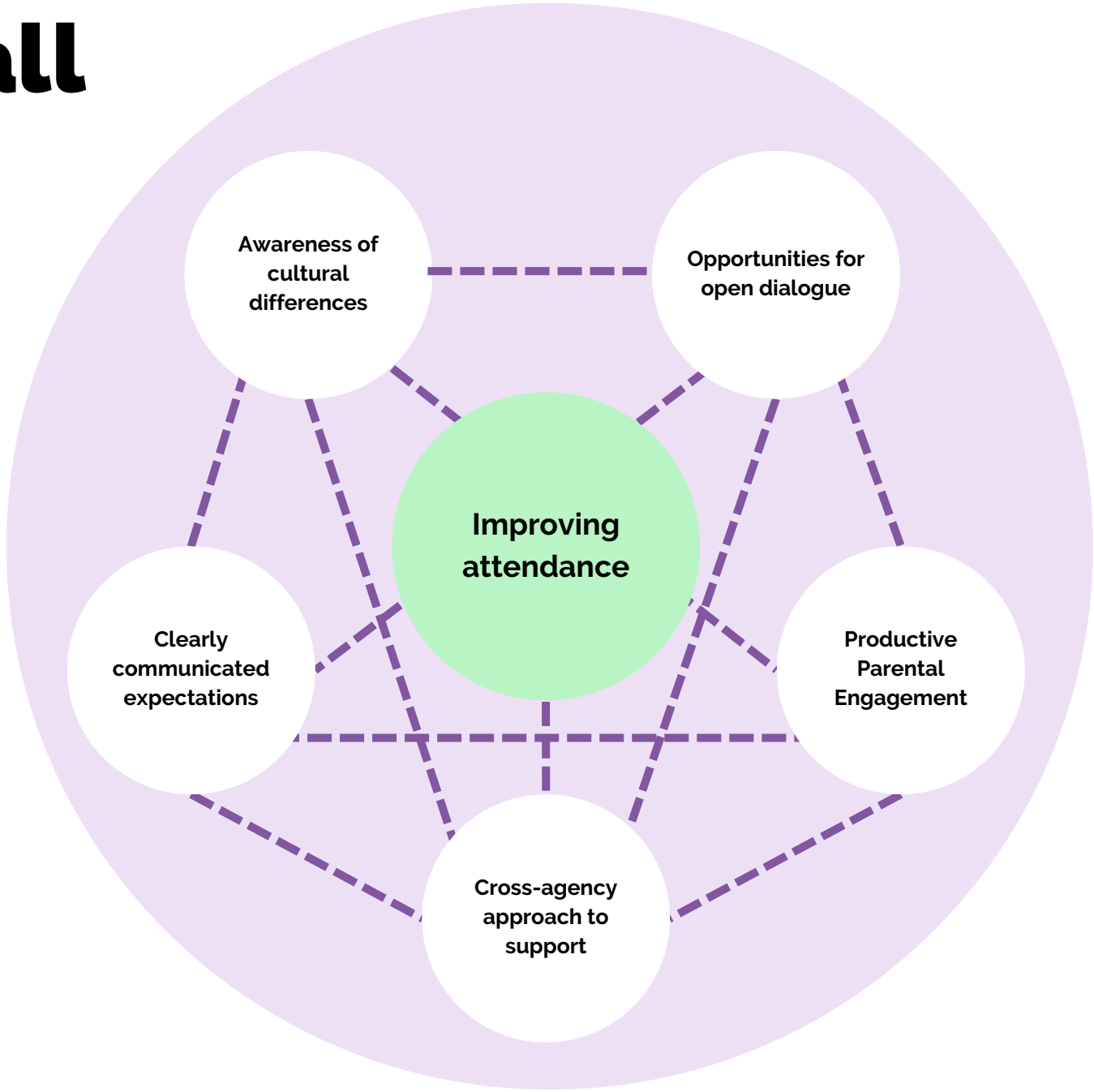
FACILITATE SUPPORT
Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help ot whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

FORMALISE SUPPORT
Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

ENFORCE
Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Joining it all together



Expect

The new guidance states:

"Aspire to higher standards of attendance from all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can and want to be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school."

Tools and strategies to support **EXPECTATIONS**:

a. Attendance policy
b. Target setting
c. Whole school targets
d. Whole school assemblies

Joining it all together:

e. Build a culture of good attendance within the whole school community
f. Key messages

a. Attendance Policy

- At the beginning of each academic year, it will be mandated that all attendance policies will need to be shared with parents/carers, children/young people and staff. It is good practice to have a differently worded version of the policy to share with the children/young people to ensure they understand what is expected of them over the course of the academic year.
- There is a clear link between attendance and safeguarding, and poor attendance can be a safeguarding issue. Therefore, all staff should be aware and trained in attendance procedures.
- Attendance should also be a standing item at all Parent-Teacher Conferences because everyone plays a role in a young person's good attendance.
- The school Attendance Policy should be reviewed annually.

Resources:

Example Attendance Policy for Primary Schools

Example Attendance Policy for Secondary Schools

Resources:

School-Home Meeting Template for Target Setting

Attendance Contract Template

b. Target Setting

- Setting a target for each individual child that had attendance below national average in the last academic year will help give focus for every person involved:
  - This should be appropriate for each individual child taking into account their unique circumstances e.g. long term illnesses
  - 0.5% attendance = 1 day in school

c. Whole School Targets

- In order that poor attenders do not become the desirable, set whole school attendance targets.
- Apply rewards consistently each week.
- Reward all improvements however small - some children will never have 100% attendance.
- Talk about attendance regularly in assembly to keep the topic relevant.

Resources:

100% Attendance Award

Improved **Attendance Award**

Attendance Stickers

d. Whole School Assembly

Resources:

The Importance of Attendance at Primary School

Children's Commissioner: back into school resources

- These are some great resources to use in assemblies or coffee mornings with children and parents to highlight the importance of good school attendance.
- Highlight the reasons why children and young people should be in school everyday:
  - No lost learning to catch up on
  - See their friends
  - Going on class trips
  - Attendance awards
  - Easier for parents to work

Expect: joining it all together

e. Building a culture of good attendance

- **Emphasise attendance from the first day of term.** Send home attendance policy and tips for families and engage parents and carers throughout the academic year around their child's attendance.
- **Engage families.** Create a safe and welcoming environment for families to share their concerns openly. Discuss attendance at parents evenings and ensure families who are unable to attend school are also engaged via outreach services.
- **Promote good attendance amongst pupils.** Engaging the young people in managing their own attendance is a good life skill. Check in with pupils when they return from an absence and show them that trusted adults in school care about them being there.
- **Evaluate possible barriers to education.** The home life of pupils will impact on their ability to engage effectively with their education.
- **Attendance is everyone's responsibility**. Ensure there is a senior leader leading on attendance and it is high on staff meeting agendas.



f. Key messages

- **Good attendance helps children do well in school and ultimately the workplace.** Good attendance ensures school success and this begins as early as pre-school. Poor secondary school attendance is a key indicator to poor exam results and a student becoming NEET. By promoting regular attendance and punctuality, pupils are well prepared for a successful working life.
- **Authorised and unauthorised absences rapidly add up to significant lost teaching time.** Pupils are at risk academically if they miss 10% of the school year (20 days). These absences do not have to be consecutive, lots of sporadic days off can quickly mount up to 20 days across the academic year.
- **Chronic absence - when a child misses more than 10% of the academic year - does not just affect the pupil absent from school.** If lots of pupils are regularly absent from school, it can become hard to teach the class at a constant pace, meaning even those who have 100% attendance are then affected.
- **Early intervention is key.** By monitoring all absences for all pupils (including authorised absences) it is possible to intervene early and help tackle the problem before it becomes unmanageable.
- **Relationship building is key to success.** Pupils are more likely to go to school if they know someone cares about them being there. If there is a trusted adult within the school community that is able to identify families struggling and help remove the barriers to education pupils are far more likely to respond positively.
- **Reducing chronic absence will close the gap in educational attainment.** Chronic absence particularly impacts students of low-income families where they depend on school for the majority of their opportunities to learn. By reducing chronic absences, especially in low-income families, the gap in educational outcomes will also close.
- **Punctuality Matters.** Arriving five minutes late every day adds up to over three days lost each year. Arriving 15 minutes late every day adds up to two weeks absence a year. Arriving 30 minutes late every adds up to 19 days absence a year.

Monitor

The new guidance states:

"**Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns of poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched."**

Tools and strategies to support **MONITORING:**

a. Daily monitoring of attendance

Joining it all together:

b. Identifying patterns of attendance/non-attendance

a. Daily Monitoring of Attendance

- It is best practice to offer early morning support, such as a text or phone call, before the young person is late into school. This can be done by an attendance practitioner or other trusted member of staff in school.
- By a specified time (e.g. 10am) the School Attendance Officer should make a phone call home for all absent students.
- The Attendance Officer should also ensure all statutory parties are informed of any absentees e.g. social workers where relevant. This is to ensure that everyone is up to date with the most recent information - remember, just like safeguarding, you possibly only have one piece of the puzzle.
- Monitor attendance data and daily routines to identify patterns as early as possible and act on them - sign up to share daily attendance data with the DfE.
- Make use of the daily attendance reports to support your identification of pupils who need support.
- Identify any patterns of non-attendance and address them.
- Children who had an unauthorised absence on any day in the first week of term experienced an overall unauthorised absence rate of 25% compared to an overall unauthorised absence rate of 2% for pupils who didn't miss any sessions in the first week.
- Missing the second, third or fourth day of the new term is associated with an overall absence of around 43%, or 30 days of school, compared to missing days near the end of term, which were associated with an overall absence of 20-30%.

Resources:

The Children's Commissioner: A Guide for Attendance Officers



Monitor: joining it all together

b. Patterns of attendance/non attendance

Identify which is your most commonly missed day.

Make them more exciting for children and young people:

- Host special school dinners
- Host popular lunchtime clubs
- Host guest speakers/activity days
- Host parental engagement events e.g. coffee mornings
- Host reward assemblies
- Allow children whose birthday it is to come to school in their own clothes



Listen and Understand

The new guidance states:

"**When a pattern is spotted discuss with pupils and parents to listen, to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them."**

Tools and strategies to support **LISTENING and UNDERSTANDING:**

a.Tips for talking to families
b. Possible reasons for school absence

Joining it all together:

c. Professionals understanding non-attendance
d. Root Causes and Theory of Action

Ensure the wider family/contexts are considered:

e. Non-violent communication
f. ACEs
g. Cultural Competency

a. Tips for talking to families

- Some absences are unavoidable, children are expectedly ill at some point in their school career.
- Parents and carers often don't realise how quickly attendance drops when children are off and the impact this will have on their children. Children will suffer academically if they miss 10% of school per year or 20 days which is roughly 1.5 days every two weeks.
- Sporadic absences are just as important to avoid as consecutive absences, because every day lost in school is 0.5% attendance lost.
- Promoting good attendance and punctuality from as early as pre-school is vital for success later in the pupil's academic and working life. Setting up good habits in the short term can only benefit everyone in the long term.
- Chronic absence in secondary school is a key indicator for a pupil becoming NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training). Local Authorities are ultimately responsible for those who become NEET. It is, therefore, within their interest to ensure that the young person attends well and work with schools to promote good attendance
- Too many absent pupils can impact on the teaching of the whole class as when these pupils return the teacher still needs to catch them up on work missed - this becomes disruptive to the rest of the class that were present on the previous days.
- Always use non-violent communication with families (see page 19).
- It is always important to share key messages with families (see page 10), but this should be done sensitively.
- Always dig a little deeper into the situations behind poor attendance and follow these tips for having difficult conversations with young people and families.

b. Possible reasons for school absence

- The headteacher has authorised the absence.
- The child could not attend because of sickness or 'unavoidable cause' in an emergency. Case law has held that stress arising from bullying, behavioural or mental health difficulties or a 'chaotic lifestyle' should not be considered an 'unavoidable cause' - therefore following tips and ideas from this toolkit is vital to ensure you are supporting your most vulnerable children, young people and families.
- The child was absent on a day exclusively set apart for religious observance.
- The school is outside of the statutory walking distance of the child's home (beyond 2 miles for under 8s and beyond 3 miles for over 8s) and the Local Authority has a duty to make travel arrangements in relation to the child under and has failed to discharge that duty.
- The child is not registered at the school and the parents are providing a suitable alternative education.
- The parents' trade or business requires them to travel from place to place.
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions in schools.



Listen and Understand: joining it all together

c. Professionals understanding non attendance

Motivating Questions	Answers/Barriers to attendance
What is the family's experience of education (past and present)?	Parent/carer had a poor experience at school. Young person has experienced bullying or peer pressure. Young person/parent/carer has some unmet SEND needs.
What are the patterns to the young person's attendance (past and present)? Dig a little deeper and find out why?	Young person regularly does not attend certain days.
Join it all together: How does everything relate to each other?	Create a bigger picture about home life as well as life in school.
Foundations: what are the positives currently? What can you do to build on these?	Very few situations are completely hopeless. Find the positives and build on these with small, steady steps.

d. Root Causes and Theory of Action

Root Cause	Theory of Action
Lack of understanding.	Inform families of the impact of persistent absences.
Lack of relationship between the school and family.	By offering an 'open door' policy to discuss concerns and by building positive relationships between school and home, communication is improved and support from families will increase.
Families do not know how to support attendance	Provide families with tools and skills to help support their child's attendance.
Language barriers.	Ensure you offer documents in a variety of languages.

e. Non-violent communication (NVC)

- NVC is a way of interacting that facilitates exchanging information and resolving differences.
- With a focus on human feelings and needs, the practice of NVC emphasises emotional intelligence in expressing what's going on for someone.
- It relies on objective observations rather than evaluations.
- By employing clear requests in place of demands, NVC raises the bar for communication skills by allowing everyone to achieve their needs on their own terms.

Marshall Rosenburg

Resources:

Non-Violent Communication

f. Cultural Competency

- Understanding and being aware of cultural differences:
  - Have key documents translated into common languages.
  - Ask your Local Authority to provide a translator for meetings - do not rely on young people to translate for their parents/carers.
- Celebrate religious festivals in school to encourage attendance on those days:
  - Own clothes so those celebrating can wear traditional dress if they wish.
  - Parents lead workshops about specific festivals.
- Do not allow your own unconscious bias determine the future of a young person.

g. ACEs - Trauma informed approach

- ACEs are Adverse Childhood Experiences.
- Trauma informed practice is a strengths based approach. It aims to understand and carefully respond to the impact of trauma on a person's life. The approach emphasises:
  - Physical safety
  - Psychological safety
  - Emotional safety
- Trauma informed approaches aim to empower individuals and helps them to re-establish their control.

Resources:

ACEs - YouTube Video

The stories of the children and families we have supported demonstrates what works when tackling poor attendance.

This is Aiden's story.

School-Home Support practitioner Ayesha began working with Aiden and his family just before Christmas in 2021. Aiden's attendance had dropped significantly due to medical issues he had experienced in the previous school year, and he was having trouble building his attendance back up.

Because of Aiden's medical issues his parents were very anxious about Aiden being in school, and were becoming increasingly reluctant to share information with school about what was happening at home.

To better understand the situation at home, Ayesha set up a meeting with his dad, during which she learnt that the family had recently welcomed a new baby, something school had not been informed of.

Meeting with Aiden, Ayesha learnt that his worries about going to school were also due to feeling anxious about leaving his family and feeling insecure due to the new baby in the family. Ayesha was able to work with Aiden on helping him to overcome some of these feelings. As she got to know and understand Aiden, Ayesha was then able to reassure dad that Aiden wasn't unhappy at school, and that sometimes he just needed the extra encouragement and support to get there.

By the end of the academic year, Aiden's attendance had risen from 66% to 80%. While his attendance will continue to be monitored by school due to ongoing health concerns, he is now in a much happier and stable place and is enjoying spending more time in school.



Facilitate Support

The new guidance states:

"**Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues."**

Tools / strategies to support **FACILITATING SUPPORT**:

a. Family Engagement: Facilitate support between home and school
b. Universal Strategies for Building High Attendance

a. Family Engagement

- Most parents have aspirations for their children and want the very best for them, and all parents can support their children's learning in some way.
- Partnerships with families are essential in children achieving their fullest academic potential.
- Ensuring you are working with a family, and not doing things to a family, is key for success.
- Sharing positive messages with parents and carers too, however small - if the phone calls are always to deliver negative news, families will stop answering the phone.
- Communication should be relevant and necessary - do not over communicate.
- When Parental Engagement is high, attendance is high.

Resources:

Good to be Green behaviour policy

Improving Attendance: It Starts At Home (plus parent/carer group work session)

How to support a child who doesn't want to go to school

Desreen's Story

b. Universal Strategies for Building High Attendance

Resources:

Morning Routine Chart - Primary School

Evening Routine Chart - Primary School

Attendance Group Work

- Recognise good and improved attendance - even the smallest amount of improvement should be recognised and celebrated for all students (even those with already good attendance).
- Proactively and positively engage families and pupils in all aspects of school life.
- Early intervention for families and pupils of concern.
- Hold a Whole School 'Attendathon' - which class/year group/key stage can get the highest attendance over a set period of time.
- Identify strategies for removing barriers to education and provide these in an accessible format for families.

Facilitate Support: joining it all together

VOLUNTARY SUPPORT

Helping parents to access services of their own accord and / or a voluntary whole family plan to tackle the barriers to attendance

FORMAL SUPPORT

A formal parenting contract agreed by the pupil, parent, school and/or local authority

Progressing to a legally binding Education Supervision Order in the Family Court if there is non-engagement and deemed necessary

STATUTORY CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE INVOLVEMENT

Where there are safeguarding concerns and an Education Supervision Order is not appropriate or has not been successful the case should be considered for a s.17 or s.47 statutory social care involvement.

ATTENDANCE PROSECUTION

Where all other routes have failed or are not deemed appropriate, the case should be considered for attendance prosecution in the Magistrates Court (or a FPN for irregular attendance)

Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

This is Sophie's story.

Sophie is 14 and lives with her dad. Her mum does not live at home and has an ongoing substance dependency. With a complex home situation, Sophie has been disengaged with school for some time, with her poor attendance a long term issue. When Sophie was referred to School-Home Support, her attendance was at 56.3%.

Due to heavy and painful periods, Sophie often didn't feel well enough to go to school, and when she was not there she would spend her time isolated and in bed. She had previously resisted any offerings of support, and was completely disengaged with her learning. She was lacking in confidence and did not have any aspirations for her future.

School-Home Support practitioner Linda got to know Sophie and began to unpack the complex challenges she was facing at home and in the classroom. Working alongside the school, Linda encouraged Sophie to start seeing the school counsellor and developed plans with her teachers to improve her attendance and engagement in her core subjects. For example, Sophie was given some allowance for lateness as long as she made it into school during tutor time, which took some of the pressure off Sophie on those mornings she wasn't feeling well.

Linda also built a trusting relationship with Sophie's dad, who now feels supported to become more involved in Sophie's learning, attending parents evenings and setting out plans for Sophie to join him for her work experience later in the year.

In just over three months of support, Sophie's attendance has improved from 56.3% to 61%. Not only is she spending more time in school, Sophie's teachers have reflected on the improvement they have seen in her engagement during her lessons: "Sophie has changed from being a reluctant learner towards being a committed learner. She completes the work in class, her homework is all up to date. She puts her hand up to answer questions and her behaviour has dramatically improved."



Formalise Support

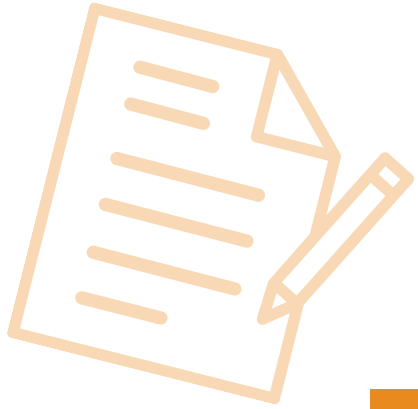
The new guidance states:

"**Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order."**

Tools and strategies to support **FORMALISING SUPPORT**:

a. Targeted and intensive support for the young person and their family

This may include a Parenting Contract
This will include involving the LA
Further meetings with all parties involved lead by the LA



a. Targeted and intensive support

- Identify and complete targeted work for those pupils and families that continue to show concern:
  - Personalised mentoring
  - Short term challenges with high praise and rewards
  - Regular and consistent contact with home at agreed times

- Intensive work for those pupils and families where attendance still doesn't improve following targeted support:
  - Pastoral Support Plan - dig a little deeper and really get to understand what is happening outside of school
  - Key Worker involvement
  - External Agency Support (e.g. referrals to CAMHS, counselling services, housing officers, Local Authority Attendance Services, Early Help)



Resources for successful targeted and intensive support:

Personalised Mentoring and Parental Engagement

Behaviour Summary Checklist: one and two

This is Jacob's story.

Jacob is 12 years old and lives with his mum, his two older brothers and his younger sister. Originally from Czechoslovakia, his family have moved around a lot, and the recent move to the area was due to Jacob's mum experiencing physical abuse from his father. This was having a significant impact on Jacob's education, as he was at his fourth new school since 2019.

Jacob's family were living in extremely difficult and cramped conditions, with Jacob and his younger sister sleeping on two sofas pushed together in the living room. Their situation at home was putting great strain on the families emotional and physical wellbeing.

Jacob was relied upon to support his mum with her physical and mental health needs, as well as translating for her. When he was able to get to school, he was emotionally and physically drained and struggled to engage in his lessons. School-Home Support practitioner Danielle worked closely with the family to tackle their difficult living conditions, utilising our Welfare Fund to buy new foldaway beds to ensure the family all had their own bed to sleep in, and supported them with the process of applying for better housing.

At school, Danielle worked with school staff to allocate free breakfast club places for Jacob and his younger sister, meaning she was able to have a daily morning check-in with them both to monitor their attendance and wellbeing. She supported Jacob to join the school football team, which he greatly enjoyed and allowed him to find his place among his peers.

By tackling the family's housing issues, and supporting Jacob at school, his attendance, engagement and wellbeing started to improve. In just one month of support, Jacob's attendance increased from 69.1% to 74.5%, an extra two full days in school a month. Happier at school and at home, Jacob and his family are back on track and are building resilience for their future.



Enforce

The new guidance states:

"Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupils right to an education."

Tools and strategies to support **ENFORCING**:

a. Statutory intervention and Legal action

- Ensure all recording is up to date and available to the relevant parties - ensure your setting has a Case Recording Guidelines policy and follow it.
- This is particularly relevant when attendance drops below 50%.
- Identify any safeguarding concerns and report them according to both your Local Authority guidelines and setting policy.
- If there is already statutory intervention in place, ensure the worker is updated daily on the status of the child or young person's attendance.

Enforce: joining it all together

Legal action

Fixed Penalty Notice

- Issued to parents whose child/ren does not attend school
  - £60 if it's paid in the first 21 days rising to £120. The Penalty Notice must be paid within 28 days.
  - The Headteacher decides if they want to issue a Fixed Penalty Notice to a parent/s and requests the Local Authority to issue it on their behalf.
  - No right of appeal against a Fixed Penalty Notice and if it is not paid, the Local Authority can choose to prosecute the parents/carers.

Parenting Order

- Imposed by a court following a successful prosecution for non-attendance at school. The order will require parents to:
  - attend parenting classes for up to three months, to support them in improving the child's behaviour;
  - comply with other conditions, for up to 12 months
- Parents have a right of appeal against an order to the Crown Court.
- The police can enforce the order and if it is breached, parents/carers can be fined up to £1,000.

Education Supervision Order:

- Granted in the Family Court and requires the parent/carer and the young person to follow directions set out to improve school attendance.
- Works alongside the LA.

School Attendance Order:

- Issued if the LA believes a young person isn't receiving an education.
- 15 days to register at the school set out in the order or provide evidence that the young person is being educated at home.

This is Matthew's story.

Matthew lives at home with his mum, older brother and younger sister. He was very anxious about going to school and was refusing to attend his mainstream school, resulting in his attendance dropping to just 10.8%. When Matthew did go to school he refused to go into the lessons and would often run around the school or go missing.

As he was out of school for so much of the time, Matthew found it hard to socialise and engage with others, and would become very defensive if anyone tried to talk to him. He also found learning very difficult, as he has a number of complex learning needs including dyslexia, dyspraxia and dyscalculia. As his anxiety towards going to school worsened, his family were at crisis point, and his mum wasn't sure where else to turn.

Because of the complexity of Matthew's challenges at school, he was moved to the alternative provision where our practitioner Jaime works. Here, Jaime had the capacity to give Matthew the daily support he needed to start to unpick the barriers to him being in school.

Jaime looked beyond the situation at school to understand Matthew's home situation too. Matthew's mum is a single parent working three different jobs and often found it difficult to get him to school. Jaime began to take Matthew to school and dropped him off home after each day, while she made an application to the Welfare Fund to get Matthew a new bike which allowed him to get to school safely each day. With his new bike, Matthew has a new independence and started looking forward to riding it to school.

At school, Jaime supported Matthew to join in with activities at breaks and lunchtimes, as well as setting him up with a CAMHs appointment every two weeks. Initially on a reduced timetable, Matthew has been able to gradually increase his lesson time and engage more with his learning. Spending more time in school, Matthew is enjoying his time there and building relationships
with his peers. Now that he is feeling much less anxious about going, his attendance has improved to 80.2%.



Resources: Effective School Attendance Improvement and Management

Prevention
of poor attendance through good whole school attendance management

ALL PUPILS
Developing good attendance patterns through effective whole school approach to attendance (including leadership, ethos and systems and processes.

PUPILS AT RISK OF POOR ATTENDANCE
Using attendance and absence data rigorously to support pupils with increasing levels of absence, arriving at school late or taking leave in term time without permission before it becomes a regular pattern.

Early intervention
to reduce absence before it becomes habitual

PUPILS WITH POOR ATTENDANCE
Intervening as early as possible and agreeing an action plan for pupils with high levels of absence and those demonstrating growing disengagement with school.

Targeted
to reduce absence before it becomes habitual

PERSISTENTLY AND SEVERELY ABSENT PUPILS
Put additional targeted support in place, where necessary working with partners, and agree a joint approach with local authorities for all severely absent pupils.

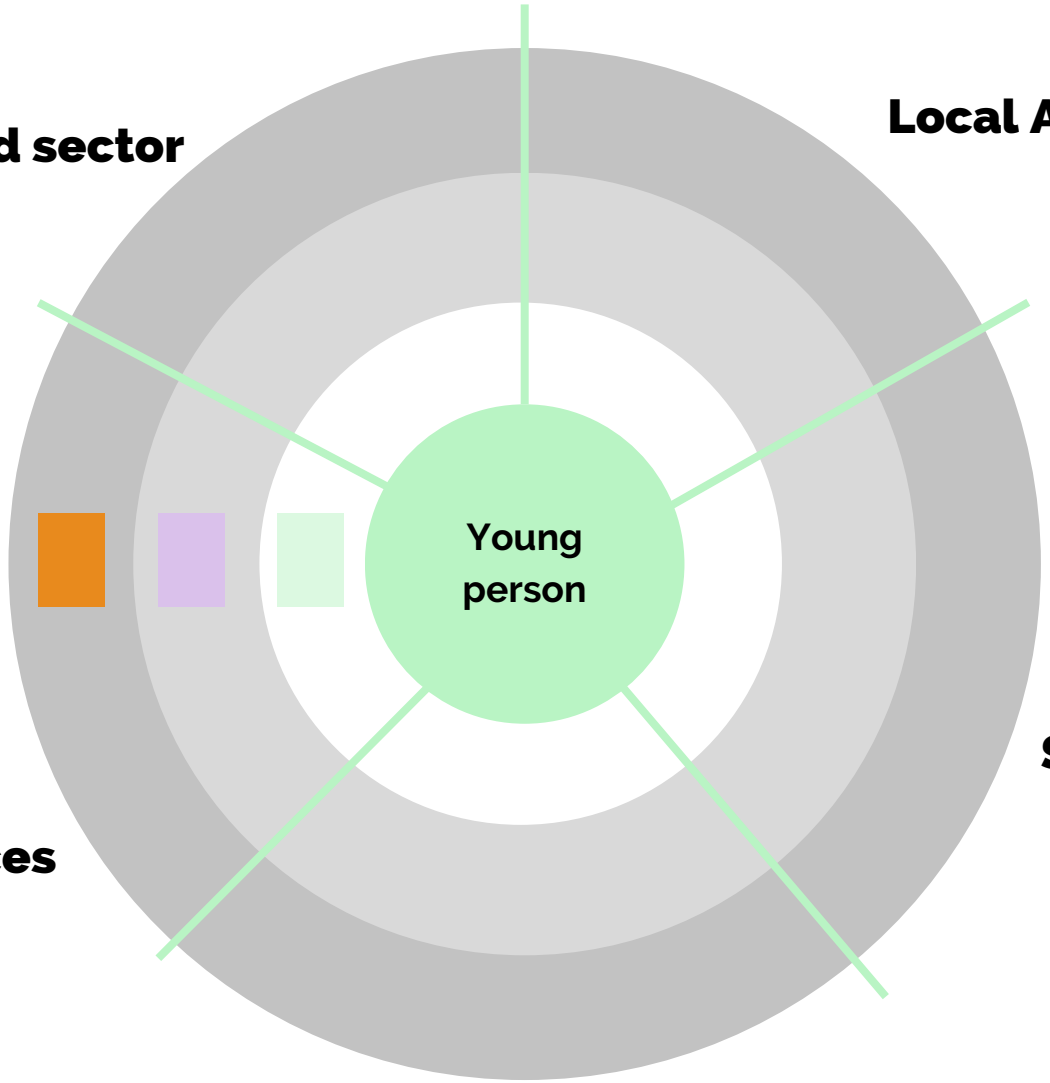
Source: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1099677/Working_together_to_improve_school_attendance.pdf

Resources: Contextual safeguarding

Work developing strategies or policies for working with children or young people

Work with practitioners who work directly with children / young people

Work directly with children / young people



Feedback and continual development

School-Home Support welcomes feedback from outside agencies and would encourage you to complete this case study form for any scenario where this toolkit has helped your setting and the family overcome poor attendance.

School-Home Support