



Changes to Attendance 24-25

Principal and Regional Directors



Department
for Education

**Working together to
improve school
attendance 24-25**

**MOMENTS
MATTER,
ATTENDANCE
COUNTS.**

July 2024

Agenda

- **Introduction**
- **Overview of changes**
- **Expectations of schools**
- **Expectation from local authorities and other partners**

2024 Attendance Reforms



- **Revised statutory version of Working together to improve school attendance guidance:** Ensuring clearer routes for schools and local authorities & reflecting changes detailed below.

New guidance
effective from 19th
August 2024



- **Regulations to mandate attendance data sharing by all state funded schools:** Giving schools, LAs and DfE access to near-live high-quality data, allowing better, more targeted support to be put in place as early as possible.

Over 90% of schools
already signed up to
share data



- **Regulations to modernise school attendance and admission registers:** Designed with schools & LAs, to improve consistency & accuracy of recording. Registers to be kept electronically. Schools must inform LA when pupil has/will miss 15 days due to illness.

New code will track
use of part-time
timetables



- **New National Framework for Penalty Notices:** Single National threshold will improve consistency and embed 'support first' approach by ensuring penalty notices are only considered where support is not engaged with, not working or not appropriate.

Fine considered with
5 days unauthorised
absence



- **New National Attendance Ambassador:** Key roles including acting as sector-facing lead for attendance hubs: disseminating effective practice to schools and trusts: and working with DfE's regional teams to support strong attendance

Rob Tam, founder of
1st attendance hub

Overview

What is it?

- Introduced in 2022, following Schools White Paper.
- Non-statutory; most schools/ LAs already implementing key parts
- Based on existing best practice
- Support First approach

Working together to improve attendance 24/25

Expect	Aspire to high standards of attendance from all pupils 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 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.
Listen and Understand	When a pattern is spotted, discussing with pupils and parents to listen to 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 or 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 an attendance 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: a penalty notice in line with the National Framework or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

What's new?

- Statutory guidance from 19th August
- Increased clarity on link between attendance and wider school culture, including importance of working with families
- Reflect changes to the law on keeping school attendance and admission registers
- Set out the new National Framework for penalty notices.
- Changes 'parenting contracts' to 'attendance contracts' to better reflect agreement between parents, schools and/or LAs

How have the expectations been updated?

What's new for school?

- Updated section on physical & mental ill health to give clarity: on schools' role; around medical evidence; on additional support for pupils with SEND; on part-time timetables.
- Clarification of expectations of senior attendance champions.
- Explain new requirements on data sharing
- Expectation to inform a pupil's youth offending team worker of any unexplained absences

What's new for LAs?

- Increased clarity: on additional attendance services that may be traded; on LA responsibilities for cross-border pupils; on how to hold effective Targeting Support Meetings.
- Flexibility in how LAs work with independent schools, to better suit local needs.
- Further detail on cross partnership ownership of attendance improvement.

1) Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them

- **Build positive relationships between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance**
- **Support pupils and parents to address any in-school barriers**
- **Work with the LA and other local partners to support families with out of school barriers**
- **Intensify support where absence does not improve or earlier support is not engaged with**

2) Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance

- **Make attendance central to the school's vision**
- **Recognise interplay between attendance & wider improvement**
- **Have a dedicated senior champion on the school's leadership team**
- **Train all staff on importance of good attendance**
- **Resource attendance support appropriately**
- **Set high expectations for attendance and punctuality of all pupils**
- **Visibly demonstrate benefits of good attendance throughout school life**
- **Continuously work to improve attendance**
- **Recognise children missing education can be vital safeguarding warning**



3) Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils and parents understand

- **A school's policy needs to include:**
- **Clear set expectations for pupils and parents**
- **Name/contact details of senior champion and pastoral staff**
- **Day to day processes for managing attendance**
- **How good attendance will be incentivised**
- **How the school will use its data to target improvement efforts**
- **How the school will support persistently and severely absent pupils**
- **When fixed penalty notices and other legal interventions will be used, inc. details of the new National Framework**

4) Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence

- **Maintain the admission register in line with regulations**
- **Accurately record in the attendance register in line with regulations**
- **Retain registers for 6 years from date of entry**
- **Only grant leaves of absence in specific circumstances**
- **Set clear day to day processes for following up absences**
- **Regularly update parents on their child's attendance and absence**

5) Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place

- **Monitor and analyse weekly attendance patterns**
- **Provide regular reports to class or form teachers to facilitate discussions**
- **Identify pupils who need support**
- **Conduct thorough analysis of half-termly, termly and full year data**
- **Benchmark against local, regional and national levels**
- **Devise strategies based on the data**
- **Monitor the impact of your improvement work**

6) Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe

- **Work with local community groups and other schools in the area**
- **Make the necessary returns to the local authority and work jointly with your LA point of contact and other partners when needed/of benefits of the pupil**
- **Sign up to share data electronically**
- **Inform a pupil's social worker and/or youth offending team worker or unexplained absences**

7) Be particularly mindful of pupils absent due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities

- **Work with families to mitigate anxious feelings & communicate expectation of regular attendance**
- **Work with parents to develop good support for pupils with special educational needs and disabilities**
- **Establish strategies to remove in school barriers for these pupils**
- **Ensure joined-up pastoral care is in place**
- **Make referrals to, and work with, other agencies as appropriate**
- **Ensure regular data monitoring**
- **Consider whether a time limited phased return would be appropriate**

All schools can expect their LA to:

- **Provide them with a named contact in the school attendance support team**
- **Hold regular Targeting Support Meetings**
- **Offer regular opportunities for schools to come together to share effective practice**
- **Work with them to provide support for pupils who are persistently absent or at risk of becoming so**
- **Agree a joint approach with them for every severely absent pupils**
- **Take forward attendance legal intervention**