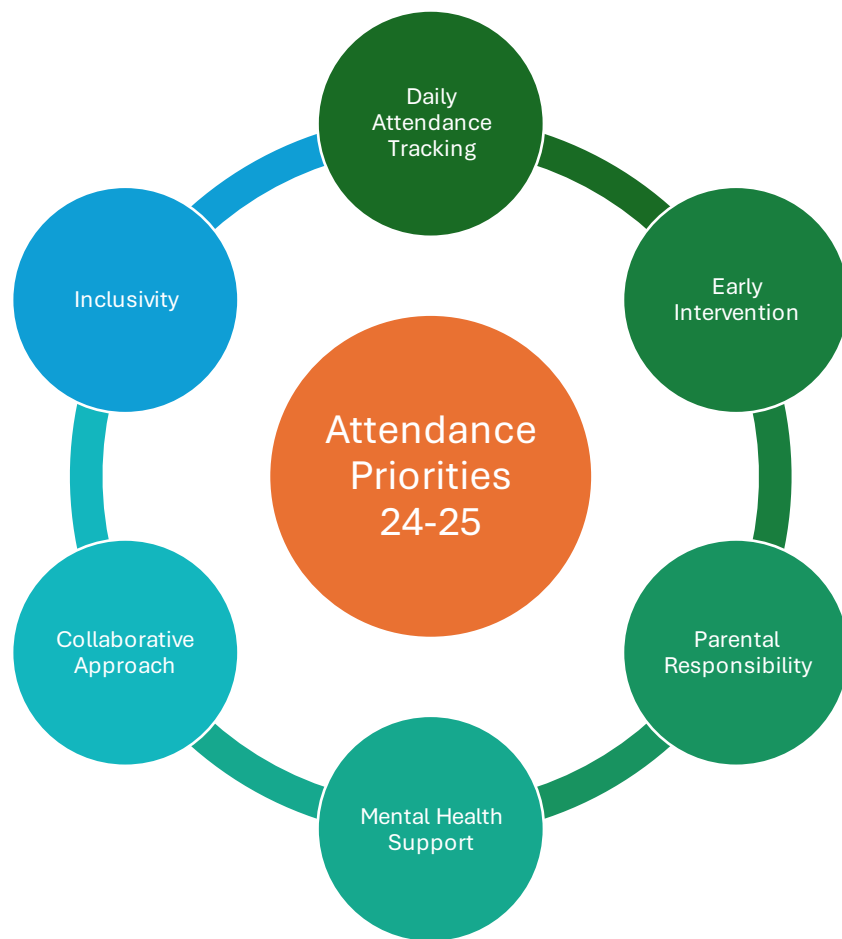


Working together to improve school attendance

DfE Attendance Guidelines

Draft Plan 24-25 – What? Why? How?



What?

1. **Daily Attendance Tracking:** Schools must monitor attendance daily and take immediate action on absences to ensure no student falls through the cracks.

Use an electronic register system for accurate records.

Have a dedicated staff member review absences each morning.

Contact parents immediately for unexplained absences.

Regularly communicate attendance importance to families.

Partner with local authorities for chronic absenteeism.

Why?

Utilising an electronic register system significantly enhances the accuracy and reliability of attendance records, ensuring data is consistently up-to-date. Assigning a dedicated staff member to review absences each morning allows for swift identification and response to attendance issues, while immediate contact with parents about unexplained absences strengthens accountability. Regular communication with families emphasises the importance of attendance and fosters a community-wide commitment to education. Furthermore, partnering with local authorities to address chronic absenteeism provides comprehensive support and resources, promoting long-term improvement. These steps, collectively, establish a robust framework for maintaining and improving student attendance.

How?

Use an electronic register system: Use a reliable system for real-time attendance tracking.

Review absences daily: Assign a staff member to check absences each morning.

Contact parents: Quickly call parents for any unexplained absences.

Communicate with families: Regularly remind families about the importance of good attendance.

Partner with authorities: Work with local agencies to support students with chronic absenteeism.

What?

- 2. Early Intervention:** Establish procedures for swift action on emerging attendance issues to prevent them from becoming chronic problems.

Set clear thresholds for when to act on absences.

Train staff to identify early signs of attendance problems.

Schedule regular meetings with parents to discuss concerns.

Provide support resources like counselling or mentor programmes.

Create a welcoming, engaging school environment to boost attendance.

Why?

Setting clear thresholds for action on absences ensures prompt intervention, preventing minor issues from escalating. Training staff to recognise early signs of attendance problems equips them to address issues proactively. Regular meetings with parents foster open communication and collaboration, addressing concerns collectively. Providing support resources, such as counselling or mentor programmes, offers targeted help to students facing challenges. Additionally, creating a welcoming and engaging school environment boosts attendance by making school a positive and motivating place for pupils. These strategies collectively form a comprehensive approach to improving and maintaining high attendance rates.

How?

Set clear thresholds: Define specific absence levels that trigger action.

Train staff: Equip staff to spot early signs of attendance issues through regular professional development (Allocated time in 2 staff meetings per term).

Hold regular meetings: Schedule consistent meetings with parents to discuss and resolve attendance concerns (Senior leaders to hold meetings following trigger data).

Provide support resources: Offer counselling or mentoring programmes to assist students (Access to Pastoral Mentor, Learning Mentor and Safeguarding Officer).

Engage school environment: Enhance the school atmosphere to make it inviting and stimulating for pupils (Led by Year Group Leaders).

What?

- 3. Parental Responsibility:** Emphasise the crucial role parents play in ensuring their children attend school regularly and on time.

Conduct workshops on attendance importance.

Send regular attendance reports home.

Celebrate excellent attendance publicly.

Set up parent-school agreements on attendance expectations.

Offer resources to help manage attendance issues (e.g., transport advice).

Why?

Conducting workshops on attendance importance raises awareness among parents and pupils, emphasising the crucial role of regular attendance in academic success. Sending regular attendance reports home keeps families informed, fostering accountability and prompting early intervention if needed. Publicly celebrating excellent attendance boosts morale and sets a positive example. Establishing parent-school agreements on attendance expectations ensures everyone is on the same page, reinforcing a united front. Offering resources like transport advice aids families facing logistical challenges, removing barriers to consistent attendance. These strategies collectively create a supportive, transparent environment that prioritises and improves attendance rates.

How?

Conduct workshops: Host informative sessions for parents and pupils about the critical role of regular attendance in educational success (one per term).

Send attendance reports: Regularly update parents on their child's attendance with detailed reports (one per term).

Celebrate attendance: Recognise and reward excellent attendance in assemblies, newsletters, or on social media (Feedback coming from School Council).

Parent-school agreements: Develop clear agreements outlining attendance expectations and responsibilities (Established and sent out at the start of each term).

Provide resources: Offer practical support like transport advice to help families overcome attendance barriers (Identify the information and signpost on the school website).

What?

4. **Mental Health Support:** Provide students with access to mental health resources to address any underlying issues that may affect attendance.

Training staff to recognise mental health issues.

Establishing a dedicated counselling service.

Creating a safe space for children to talk about their feelings.

Partnering with external mental health professionals.

Integrating mental health education into the curriculum.

Why?

Training staff to recognise mental health issues equips teachers with the skills to identify and support pupils in need, promoting early intervention. Establishing a dedicated counselling service provides specialised support, ensuring pupils have access to professional help. Creating a safe space for children to express their feelings fosters an open and trusting environment. Partnering with external mental health professionals enhances the school's capacity to address complex issues. Integrating mental health education into the curriculum normalises discussions about mental health, building resilience and awareness among pupils. Together, these initiatives create a comprehensive approach to supporting pupil wellbeing.

How?

Train staff: Organise professional development sessions focusing on recognising and responding to mental health issues (Led by Mental Health Champions).

Dedicated counselling: Hire or assign a licensed counsellor to provide ongoing mental health support for pupils (as need arises. Ed Psych support accessed as needed).

Safe space: Designate a calm, comfortable area where children can talk about their emotions without judgement (Year Groups to create).

External partnerships: Collaborate with mental health organisations to bring in additional expertise and resources (Reflexions).

Mental health education: Integrate lessons on mental health into your curriculum to build awareness and coping skills (PSHE Curriculum Review).

What?

- 5. Collaborative Approach:** Encourage partnerships with local authorities and other agencies to support students and address attendance barriers comprehensively.

Regularly meet with local authorities to share insights.

Involve external agencies in planning interventions and develop coordinated support plans for families.

Maintain open communications with social workers and counsellors.

Develop joint initiatives, like family support programmes.

Share success stories to highlight the benefits of collaboration.

Share attendance data to identify trends.

Signpost to community outreach programmes.

Why?

Regular meetings with local authorities to share insights foster a collaborative approach, enhancing the support network for pupils and families. Involving external agencies in intervention planning ensures coordinated and comprehensive support plans tailored to family needs. Open communication with social workers and counsellors is crucial for timely and effective interventions. Developing joint initiatives, like family support programmes, strengthens community ties and provides additional resources for families. Sharing success stories showcases the positive impacts of collaboration, encouraging continued partnership. Sharing attendance data helps identify trends and address underlying issues. Signposting to community outreach programmes connects families with essential services, enhancing overall community wellbeing.

How?

Meet with local authorities: Schedule regular meetings to share insights and discuss collaboration opportunities.

Involve external agencies: Engage agencies in planning interventions, ensuring coordinated support plans for families.

Communicate openly: Keep consistent lines of communication with social workers and counsellors.

Joint initiatives: Develop family support programmes in partnership with local organisations.

Share success stories: Highlight collaborative successes to motivate continued cooperation.

Share attendance data: Analyse and discuss attendance data to identify and address trends.

Signpost programmes: Provide information about relevant community outreach programmes to families.

What?

6. **Inclusivity:** Create a safe and welcoming school environment that fosters regular attendance and supports all students.

Promote a culture of respect and acceptance.

Implement anti-bullying initiatives.

Ensure curriculum represents diverse backgrounds.

Train staff on inclusive practices.

Create accessible facilities for all needs.

Why?

Promoting a culture of respect and acceptance creates an inclusive environment where every pupil feels valued. Implementing anti-bullying initiatives helps deter negative behaviour and supports victims. Ensuring the curriculum reflects diverse backgrounds fosters understanding and appreciation among students. Training staff on inclusive practices equips them to better support all pupils, creating a more equitable learning environment. Creating accessible facilities ensures all pupils, regardless of their needs, can fully participate in school activities. Collectively, these measures contribute to a positive, inclusive school culture that nurtures respect and acceptance.

How?

Promote respect and acceptance: Encourage positive interactions, celebrate diversity, and model inclusive behaviour.

Anti-bullying initiatives: Develop clear policies, awareness campaigns, and provide reporting mechanisms (led through PSHE).

Diverse curriculum: Integrate materials and perspectives from various backgrounds into your lessons (Year Group and Subject Team Reviews).

Staff training: Offer regular workshops on inclusive practices and cultural competence.

Accessible facilities: Ensure all areas are accessible to pupils with diverse needs, including ramps and sensory-friendly spaces (Inclusion Review).

In addition to the DfE guidelines, we have highlighted the importance of considering the lived experiences of teachers and school leaders:

Insights from Teachers and Leaders – Support for Staff:

What?

1. **Professional Development:** Regular training is essential for staff to recognise and address the root causes of absences effectively.

Schedule regular training sessions.

Focus on recognising root causes of absences.

Include workshops on mental health and wellbeing.

Share best practices and case studies.

Seek input from external experts.

Why?

Scheduling regular training sessions empowers staff to stay informed and adept at recognising root causes of absences. Workshops focusing on mental health and wellbeing address key factors affecting attendance, providing strategies to support students effectively. Sharing best practices and case studies enables staff to learn from successful interventions and adapt them for their own context. Collaborating with external experts brings fresh perspectives and specialised knowledge, enhancing the overall effectiveness of the training. These measures collectively build a stronger, more supportive environment that can positively impact student attendance and wellbeing.

How?

Schedule regular training sessions: Set up a termly schedule, ensuring convenient times for all staff.

Recognise root causes of absences: Train staff to identify and understand underlying issues like family problems, bullying, or mental health.

Workshops on mental health: Include sessions on recognising signs, providing support, and available resources.

Share best practices: Create forums for staff to exchange successful strategies and case studies.

External experts: Invite specialists to provide in-depth insights and advice (LA Support).

What?

2. **Teacher Workload:** Streamlining administrative tasks related to attendance can free up teachers to focus more on teaching and pupil engagement.

Use digital attendance systems.

Delegate administrative tasks to support staff.

Automate repetitive tasks.

Provide training on efficient data entry.

Regularly review and refine processes.

Why?

Implementing digital attendance systems significantly streamlines tracking and monitoring, offering real-time data and reducing errors. Delegating administrative tasks to support staff ensures teachers can prioritise teaching over paperwork. Automating repetitive tasks increases efficiency and minimises the potential for human error, saving valuable time. Providing training on efficient data entry ensures accuracy and consistency across the board. Regularly reviewing and refining these processes allows for continuous improvement and adaptation to new technological advancements. These steps collectively enhance administrative efficiency, freeing up teachers to focus on educational quality and student engagement.

How?

Digital attendance systems: Implement software/systems that allows real-time tracking and reporting (Tracker made available to all).

Delegate tasks: Assign routine admin duties to support staff, focusing teaching roles on instructional tasks (TA Attendance Champion to be identified in each year group).

Automate tasks: Use software to automate processes like attendance logging and reporting.

Training on data entry: Organise training sessions to ensure staff input data accurately and efficiently.

Review processes: Schedule regular reviews to assess and refine system effectiveness, incorporating feedback and new technology (Termly review between SLT and Attendance Officer).

What?

3. **Support Networks:** Establishing peer support systems for staff can provide valuable assistance in dealing with attendance-related challenges.

Encourage peer mentorship programmes.

Create regular staff discussion groups.

Organise workshops and collaborative sessions.

Set up a buddy system for new staff.

Facilitate communication channels for sharing experiences.

Why?

Encouraging peer mentorship programmes fosters a supportive culture where experienced staff guide less experienced colleagues, enhancing skill transfer and professional growth. Regular staff discussion groups promote collaboration, allowing teachers to share challenges and solutions. Organising workshops and collaborative sessions facilitates continuous professional development, keeping everyone updated with best practices. Setting up a buddy system for new staff ensures a smooth transition and instant support network. Facilitating communication channels, such as forums or regular email updates, ensures ongoing sharing of experiences and advice. These initiatives collectively build a cohesive, motivated team, improving teaching quality and job satisfaction.

How?

Encourage peer mentorship: Pair experienced staff with less experienced colleagues to share expertise (Led by YGLs).

Discussion groups: Schedule regular meetings for staff to discuss challenges, successes, and strategies (Staff Meetings each half term).

Workshops and sessions: Organise professional development workshops and collaborative activities (Staff Meetings and ROC opportunities).

Buddy system: Assign new staff a buddy to help them acclimate and provide initial support (YGL).

Communication channels: Use platforms like email groups, forums, or instant messaging to facilitate ongoing sharing of information/experiences (Regular attendance leaflet to be sent out).

What?

4. **Realistic Expectations:** Acknowledge that not all attendance issues can be resolved quickly. Patience and persistence are key to making long-term improvements.

Communicate that attendance improvements take time.

Set incremental goals for gradual progress.

Regularly review and adjust strategies.

Celebrate small successes to maintain morale.

Provide ongoing support and training for staff.

Why?

Communicating that attendance improvements take time sets realistic expectations, fostering patience and persistence among staff. Setting incremental goals is crucial for measuring gradual progress, providing achievable targets that build confidence. Regular reviews and adjustments ensure strategies remain effective and responsive to changing needs. Celebrating small successes maintains morale, highlighting achievements and motivating continuous effort. Providing ongoing support and training equips staff with the necessary tools and knowledge, reinforcing their capability to manage and improve attendance. This holistic approach creates a supportive environment conducive to sustained improvement.

How?

Communicate progress timelines: Clearly express that attendance improvements need time, setting realistic expectations for all (individualised target setting process).

Set incremental goals: Establish small, achievable targets to measure gradual progress and encourage persistence (Year, Term and half term targets in place for all, some, most).

Review and adjust: Regularly assess the effectiveness of your strategies and make necessary adjustments.

Celebrate small successes: Recognise and celebrate even minor improvements, reinforcing positive behaviour and maintaining staff morale.

Provide support and training: Offer continuous professional development to staff, ensuring they have the skills and resources needed.

What?

5. **Community Engagement:** Building stronger relationships with local communities can enhance support for students and families, ultimately improving attendance.

Host regular community meetings.

Partner with local organisations for support.

Create awareness campaigns about the importance of attendance.

Facilitate parent workshops and engagement activities.

Involve community leaders in school events.

Why?

Hosting regular community meetings fosters a sense of collaboration and shared responsibility for school attendance, enabling open dialogue and mutual understanding among stakeholders.

Partnering with local organisations offers additional resources and support structures, enriching the school's efforts to improve attendance. Awareness campaigns about the importance of attendance educate both parents and students, driving home the long-term benefits. Facilitating parent workshops and engagement activities actively involves families in the school ecosystem, strengthening home-school relationships. Involving community leaders in school events lends authority and visibility, reinforcing the message that attendance is a communal priority. Overall, these strategies create a supportive, informed, and engaged community that collaborates towards sustained attendance improvement.

How?

Host regular community meetings: Schedule consistent meetings to discuss attendance, share updates, and gather feedback.

Partner with local organisations: Establish collaborations with local groups for additional support and resources particularly local schools.

Create awareness campaigns: Launch initiatives to highlight the importance of regular attendance, using various media.

Facilitate parent workshops: Organise workshops and activities to engage parents, offering strategies to support attendance.

Involve community leaders: Invite local leaders to school events to show unity and reinforce the importance of attendance.