Check In, Check Up, Check Out

Creating a Culture of Belonging

A Relational Framework for Improving Attendance, Wellbeing and Engagement in Schools

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Purpose of this document

This guidance provides schools with a practical, relational, and data-informed framework to improve attendance by embedding belonging, early intervention, and inclusive practice across school culture, systems, and everyday routines.

It is designed to support school leaders, attendance and pastoral staff, and multi-agency partners to work collaboratively in addressing barriers to attendance and strengthening engagement for all pupils.

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Executive Summary

"Check In, Check Up, Check Out: Creating a Culture of Belonging" is a strategic, relational framework to transform school culture and improve attendance. Developed by **Nims Virdy**, it offers a whole-school approach rooted in empathy, inclusion, and data-informed practice.

Rather than relying on enforcement, the strategy centres on **relationships, pupil voice, and barrier-removal**. It gives schools **practical tools, predictable routines, and multi-agency systems** so every child feels safe, valued, and motivated to attend.

Key Frameworks and Tools

- **Check In, Check Up, Check Out** – weekly and termly wellbeing routines that build connection and spot issues early.
- **STAR Meetings** – a multi-disciplinary forum (Strategic Team for Attendance & Referrals) coordinating targeted support.
- **Attendance Bandings Plan** – tiered actions, powered by DfE VYED data, to prevent persistent absence.
- **Pupil Voice & Family Engagement** – inclusive strategies that co-create solutions and strengthen trust.
- **Community Partnerships** – practical support for uniform, food, transport, and tech access.
- **Staff Wellbeing & CPD** – supervision, peer support, and resilience training to sustain the work.

Expected Outcomes

- Higher attendance and punctuality across pupil groups
- Stronger sense of belonging and emotional safety
- Deeper family and community partnerships
- Reduced persistent and severe absence
- Confident, consistent, trauma-informed staff

This is more than an attendance strategy — it is a blueprint for cultural change. By **embedding belonging** into everyday routines and systems, we safeguard futures and build communities where every child **shows up, shines, and succeeds**.

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About This Document

This document brings together insights from my previous role working in a school and my current work supporting attendance across Hillingdon. It is informed by practical experience, day-to-day conversations with schools, and a range of external sources, which are referenced throughout. The ideas and suggestions offered here reflect what I have observed to be helpful in practice and what I believe may support schools in strengthening attendance, connection and belonging.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Why Attendance = Belonging

Improving school attendance is not simply about monitoring absences—it is about creating a culture where every child feels safe, valued, and motivated to attend. As an Attendance Support Officer, I have seen first-hand how school culture shapes pupils' attitudes toward learning, wellbeing, and belonging.

This project sets out a strategic, relational approach to transforming attendance practice across schools. It introduces the *Check In, Check Up, Check Out* framework — a structured model for building connection, identifying barriers early, and celebrating progress. Alongside this, it offers tools for multi-agency collaboration, inclusive communication, and targeted support for vulnerable groups.

Attendance is not just a metric — it is a lifeline. Pupils missing just 10 more days than their peers have half the odds of achieving good GCSEs. Each extra day of absence between Year 7 and Year 11 can cost a pupil £750 in future lifetime earnings. In 2023/24, over one-third of FSM-eligible pupils were persistently absent, compared to one-seventh of their peers. Children on a Child Protection Plan are significantly more likely to be severely absent, with many missing the equivalent of several weeks of school across the year. And 81% of children cautioned or sentenced for any offence had been persistently absent—rising to 85% for serious violence offences.

These figures show why attendance must be reframed — not as enforcement, but as connection. *Check In, Check Up, Check Out: Creating a Culture of Belonging* responds to this challenge by embedding relational, data-informed, and inclusive practices across school life. It is a call to action for every member of the school community to help pupils feel seen, supported, and ready to learn.

A strong sense of belonging is one of the most powerful drivers of attendance. When pupils feel seen, valued, and connected to their school community, they are more likely to attend regularly and engage positively.

Schools can foster this culture through simple, consistent actions:

- **Welcome Rituals**
  Greet pupils by name at the school gate or classroom door. A warm, personal welcome sets a positive tone for the day and helps pupils feel noticed and valued.

- **Mentor Programmes**
  Pair pupils with trusted adults or older peers who can check in regularly, offer encouragement, and provide a safe space to talk where appropriate.

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- **Belonging Surveys**
  Regularly ask pupils how connected they feel to school. Use the feedback to identify pupils who may need additional support and to shape whole-school strategies.

- **Inclusive Displays and Whole-School Messaging**
  Use displays, assemblies, newsletters, and daily interactions to celebrate the diversity of your school community—showcasing different cultures, languages, and achievements—while reinforcing the message that attendance matters. Make it clear that attendance is a shared priority across all roles and departments.

These small, intentional practices help create a school culture where every pupil feels they matter—and that sense of belonging is key to improving attendance.

1.2 Protecting Breaktimes & Outdoor Spaces: Prioritising Play and Regulation

Breaktimes are not a luxury—they are a vital part of a pupil's emotional regulation, social development, and overall wellbeing. Protecting these moments is essential for creating a culture of belonging and improving attendance.

Importantly, this is not just good practice—it is a right. **Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child** states that every child has the right to rest, leisure, play, and participation in cultural and artistic activities. Schools have a responsibility to uphold this right by ensuring pupils have regular, safe, and meaningful opportunities to play and connect with others.

Why It Matters
Removing breaktime as a punishment for attendance or behaviour issues can have unintended consequences. Pupils who miss out on play are more likely to become dysregulated, disengaged, and less able to focus in lessons—creating a cycle of further behavioural challenges and reduced attendance. Instead, restorative approaches should help pupils understand and improve behaviour without compromising their need for movement, connection, and rest.

Advantages

- Supports emotional regulation and reduces anxiety
- Strengthens peer relationships and social skills
- Improves readiness to learn and engagement in lessons
- Builds trust and resilience, contributing to better attendance

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Outdoor Activities: Creating Positive Spaces for Connection

The school environment plays a significant role in shaping pupil behaviour, wellbeing, and engagement. By investing in outdoor recreational spaces, schools can create opportunities for pupils to socialise, regulate, and build positive relationships—factors that directly influence attendance.

Recommended Additions

- Football tables
- Basketball hoops
- Table tennis facilities
- Chill-out benches or quiet zones

Impact Reported by Schools

- Improved behaviour during and after breaktimes
- Reduced social tensions and incidents
- Increased motivation to attend school, especially among pupils who struggle in classroom settings

Outdoor spaces are not just for play—they are essential for wellbeing, regulation, and relationship-building. When pupils feel they have something to look forward to at school, they are more likely to attend consistently.

1.3 Reframing Punctuality: Welcoming, Not Shaming

Punctuality matters—but how we respond to lateness can shape a pupil's sense of belonging and motivation. Publicly calling out or punishing pupils for arriving late can lead to embarrassment, anxiety, and disengagement.

Instead, adopt a culture where every pupil is welcomed, regardless of when they arrive. A simple phrase like **"I'm glad you're here"** acknowledges effort and reinforces that their presence matters.

Advantages

- Builds trust and connection
- Reduces shame and anxiety
- Encourages pupils to keep coming, even if late
- Creates an emotionally safe classroom environment

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Gate Practice and the Impact of Late Codes

Some schools position staff at gates to monitor late arrivals. While helpful for reinforcing punctuality, interactions matter. For pupils with anxiety or SEND, fear of being shamed can lead to arriving even later—sometimes after the register closes, resulting in a **Code U (Unauthorised Absence)** instead of **Code L (Late)**.

Why It Matters

- Code U counts as unauthorised absence, lowering attendance percentage
- Impacts school figures and pupil motivation
- Can escalate disengagement

DfE Guidance Highlights

- **Code L:** Late before register closes (within 30 mins)
- **Code U:** Late after register closes
  Schools must discourage lateness—but in ways that are **supportive, not punitive**.

Suggested Practice

- Use welcoming language at gates ("Glad you made it!")
- Avoid public shaming
- Provide a quiet check-in point for late arrivals
- Review Code U patterns and link to gate interactions
- Discuss in STAR Meetings

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1.4 Making Staff More Approachable: Small Changes, Big Impact

For pupils to feel safe, supported, and willing to open up about challenges that may affect their attendance, they need to know who they can turn to—and feel comfortable doing so.

One simple but powerful idea is to have **staff names clearly displayed on their lanyards**. This small gesture can:

- Help pupils learn and remember staff names

- Reduce anxiety about approaching unfamiliar adults
- Encourage more informal, positive interactions
- Strengthen the sense of community and trust within the school

But approachability goes beyond lanyards. Schools can build a **Staff Visibility & Approachability Campaign** to make staff more recognisable, relatable, and emotionally available.

Visibility Ideas

- **"Meet the Staff" Boards**: Display photos and friendly bios in corridors or reception areas. Include hobbies, favourite books, or "Why I love working here" quotes.
- **Staff-Led Videos**: Short clips for assemblies or social media where staff share their role, interests, and messages of encouragement.
- **Shared Spaces**: Encourage staff to join pupils in breakfast clubs, outdoor activities, or lunchtime games to build informal rapport.

These actions help pupils see staff as **human, approachable, and safe** — especially those who may struggle with trust, anxiety, or past negative experiences.

Approachability is not just about being friendly—it is about being **recognisable, available, and relational**. The stronger the bond between staff and pupils, the more likely pupils are to feel they belong—and the more likely they are to attend.

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1.5 Early Foundations for Attendance Success (Nursery & Reception)

Attendance habits start forming long before statutory school age. By working proactively with families and pupils in nursery and Reception, schools can lay the groundwork for strong attendance throughout primary—and beyond.

Why It Matters

- Non-statutory age pupils often face the same barriers as older children—routines, separation anxiety, transport, or health.
- Early absence patterns can become entrenched if not addressed.
- Building positive habits early supports a strong finish in Year 6 and a smoother transition to secondary school.

- A strong start to Reception helps children settle quickly, build confidence, and develop positive attendance habits from day one.

What Schools Can Do

1. Early Engagement with Families

- Host welcome sessions or home visits before children start.
- Share clear, friendly messages about the importance of regular attendance—even in nursery.
- Share the **Starting Reception** website and **School Readiness** page to help families practise key skills at home:
    - Growing independence: dressing, toileting, using cutlery
    - Building relationships & communication: sharing, expressing feelings, listening
    - Physical development: climbing, catching, puzzles
    - Healthy routines: sleep, screen time, diet, brushing teeth

2. Monitor and Support Early

- Track attendance from the start, even if not legally required.
- Identify patterns of concern and offer gentle, supportive interventions.
- Use this data to inform transition planning and targeted support.

3. Prepare for Statutory Expectations

- Help families understand what changes when their child reaches statutory school age.
- Offer workshops or info packs in Reception to explain attendance policies and expectations.
- Introduce a Reception version of the **Check-In, Check-Up, Check-Out** framework to support emotional wellbeing and belonging.

4. Support for Additional Needs

- Encourage families of children with SEND, EAL, or summer-born children to share information early.
- Signpost support from nurseries, health visitors, children's centres, and Family Hubs.

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- Recommend organisations offering guidance and resources:
    - Family Lives
    - Speech and Language UK
    - Dingley's Promise
    - KIDS

5. Build the Bridge to Year 6

- Reinforce the message that good attendance in early years sets the tone for success later on.
- Use storytelling, visuals, or pupil role models to show the journey from nursery to Year 6.
- Create a culture where attendance is seen as part of a child's growth and achievement.

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2. Core Framework: Check In, Check Up, Check Out

Creating a culture of belonging requires consistent, structured opportunities for pupils to feel seen, heard, and supported. The 'Check In, Check Up, Check Out' model provides a framework for building strong relationships, promoting emotional regulation, and identifying issues early—before they impact attendance.

2.1 Check In – Start of Term or Week:

At the beginning of each term, we propose a dedicated 'Check In' day with no formal lessons. This day allows pupils to transition back into school life after a break, reconnect with staff, and share any experiences or concerns from the holidays. Teachers can use this time to check in with each pupil individually, followed by a fun, community-building activity in the afternoon. This mirrors the INSET day often provided for staff and recognises that pupils also need time to settle back in.
Additionally, a brief check-in each Monday morning can help pupils ease into the week, offering a chance to discuss their weekend and raise any early concerns.

What It Looks Like

- **Termly Check-In Day** (e.g. first day of Autumn 1, Spring 1, Summer 1):
    - No formal lessons
    - 1:1 pupil conversations with tutors or mentors
    - Afternoon community-building activity (e.g. team games, creative workshops, pupil-led assemblies)
    - Staff briefing to share pupil concerns and plan support
- **Weekly Monday Check-In**:
    - Tutor time circle or journaling activity
    - “How are you feeling?” scale or emoji check
    - Space to share weekend highlights or worries
    - Identify pupils who may need extra support that week

Advantages

- Reduces anxiety and emotional dysregulation
- Builds trust and routine

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- Helps staff spot early signs of disengagement
- Creates a sense of welcome and belonging
- Improves readiness to learn

Optional Enhancements

- Use visual tools (e.g. wellbeing thermometers, mood meters)
- Include pupil-led welcome messages or peer mentors
- Share positive affirmations or motivational quotes

2.2 Return to School Check-In

To further strengthen the sense of belonging, we propose a simple but meaningful **Return to School Check-In** for pupils returning after absence. This does not require a formal session—just a moment of connection.

Class teachers and form tutors should be made aware of which pupils were absent the previous day and encouraged to greet them with a warm, personal message such as:

- *"We missed you yesterday."*
- *"Glad to have you back."*
- *"Is everything okay?"*

These small gestures help pupils feel noticed, valued, and welcomed back into the school community—especially if they have been absent due to anxiety, illness, or personal challenges. Over time, this consistent recognition can reduce the emotional barrier to returning to school and positively impact attendance.

To support this, schools could:

- Include absence alerts in daily tutor briefings.
- Encourage staff to log positive re-engagements.
- Avoid punitive responses on a pupil's first day back.

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What It Looks Like

- Staff awareness via tutor briefings or MIS alerts
- Warm greeting from a trusted adult:
    - "We missed you yesterday."
    - "Glad to have you back."
    - "Is everything okay?"
- Optional quiet check-in space for pupils feeling overwhelmed
- Positive reinforcement and reassurance
- Avoid punitive language or interrogation

Advantages

- Reduces shame and anxiety
- Rebuilds connection and trust
- Encourages pupils to return sooner next time
- Supports emotionally based school non-attendance (EBSNA)

Optional Enhancements

- Include a "Welcome Back Pack" with catch-up resources and a personal note
- Log positive re-engagements in CPOMS or pastoral systems
- Use pupil voice to refine the process

2.3 Welcome Back Packs

Pupils returning to school after a period of absence—whether due to illness, family circumstances, or other reasons—often face the challenge of reintegrating into the classroom environment. To support these pupils and reduce the risk of further absence, schools should implement a **Welcome Back Pack** system.

These packs should include:

- A **personalised message** from a member of staff, letting the pupil know they were missed and are valued.
- A **summary of key learning and topics** covered during their absence.

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- **Catch-up resources** such as worksheets, reading materials, or links to recorded lessons.
- A **simple plan or checklist** to help the pupil reintegrate at their own pace.

By providing structured support and a warm welcome, schools can ease the anxiety pupils may feel about falling behind. This approach helps pupils feel seen, supported, and more confident in re-engaging with their learning—ultimately reducing the likelihood of further absence.

2.4 Check Up – Mid-Term or Mid-Week:

Midway through each half term, a 'Check Up' session provides an opportunity to reflect on how things are going. This could take place during tutor time or a pastoral session and may include checking whether pupils have the resources they need, how they are coping academically and emotionally, and whether any support is required. A weekly version of this could be held on Wednesdays to maintain momentum and address issues midweek.

What It Looks Like

- **Mid-Term Check-Up** (Week 3 or 4 of each half term):
    - Tutor-led wellbeing survey or discussion
    - Review of attendance and punctuality data
    - Identify pupils needing mentoring or STAR referral
- **Weekly Wednesday Check-Up**:
    - “What’s going well?” and “What’s been tricky?” prompts
    - Peer support or ambassador involvement
    - Staff follow-up on any concerns raised

Advantages

- Prevents issues from escalating
- Builds emotional literacy and self-awareness
- Strengthens pupil-staff relationships
- Improves targeting of support and referrals

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Optional Enhancements

- Use digital tools (e.g. Forms, Padlet) for anonymous feedback
- Include a "Wellbeing Wall" or "Check-Up Journal"
- Invite external partners (e.g. school nurse, counsellor) for drop-ins

2.5 Check Out – End of Term or Week:

At the end of each term—often a half day in many schools—a 'Check Out' session allows staff to reflect with pupils on how the term has gone. Teachers can ask what pupils need for the break, whether they have any anxieties, and how they are feeling overall. This helps ensure pupils leave school feeling supported and prepared. A weekly version of this could be held on Fridays to close the week positively and strengthen relationships.
These regular check-ins and check-outs foster a culture of care and connection, making pupils more likely to disclose issues early and feel a stronger sense of belonging—both of which are key to improving attendance.

What It Looks Like

- **Termly Check-Out**:
    - Reflection activity (e.g. journaling, drawing, group discussion)
    - Celebration assembly or shout-outs
    - Wellbeing packs or reminders for holiday routines
    - Staff debrief to plan support for next term
- **Weekly Friday Check-Out**:
    - "Highs and lows of the week" activity
    - Certificates or postcards home
    - Preview of next week's goals or events

Advantages

- Reinforces positive behaviour and attendance
- Builds emotional resilience

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- Strengthens peer and staff relationships
- Prepares pupils for transitions and holidays

Optional Enhancements

- Include pupil-led celebration activities
- Use visual trackers (e.g. attendance stars, progress thermometers)
- Share gratitude messages or affirmations

2.6 Adapting the Framework for Different Scenarios

The Check In, Check Up, Check Out model is not just for pupils attending full-time—it should also apply when pupils are on **part-time timetables (PTTT)** or **excluded**, to maintain connection and belonging.

- **Check-In**: Welcome pupils warmly at the start of their time in school. If excluded, make a phone or online wellbeing check at the start of the exclusion period.
- **Check-Up**: Use mid-term reviews or mid-point contacts to assess progress, emotional wellbeing, and readiness to increase hours or reintegrate.
- **Check-Out**: Celebrate small wins and progress, and hold a reintegration meeting or call before the pupil returns full-time.

Staff Principles for the Framework

To make the routines effective, staff use:

- **Warm, predictable language**
- **Curiosity over judgement**
- **Calm, regulated presence**
- **Clear boundaries delivered with compassion**
- **Shared awareness across teams**
- **Brief but meaningful interactions**

The framework does not add workload. It refocuses existing routines so that pupils feel seen, families feel supported, and staff catch concerns early.

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What This Framework Is Not

- Not a behaviour management strategy
- Not a series of scripted interventions
- Not an attendance enforcement tactic
- Not a replacement for SEND support
- Not a mental health treatment plan

It is a **relational structure** that underpins everything else.

Why It Works Across All Phases

The simplicity and predictability of the routine mean it can be adapted for:

- Early Years
- Primary
- Secondary
- Specialist settings
- Alternative provision

Anywhere belonging matters, this model works.

Embedding the Framework Across School Life

To maximise impact, the Check In, Check Up, Check Out model should be:

- **Timetabled** into pastoral and tutor programmes
- **Aligned** with STAR Meetings, safeguarding reviews, and SEND support
- **Supported** by staff CPD on relational and trauma-informed practice
- **Informed** by pupil voice and feedback
- **Celebrated** through displays, assemblies, and social media

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Using Part-Time Timetables Responsibly: Supporting Reintegration & Belonging

Part-time timetables (PTTTs) can be a **short-term bridge** for pupils experiencing EBSNA, medical recovery, or complex needs. Their use must be **purposeful, time-limited, and reviewed** to avoid replacing full-time education.

Principles for Use

- **Purposeful:** support reintegration, not behaviour management or masking unmet needs.
- **Planned:** clear reintegration plan, agreed with families; **fortnightly reviews**.
- **Protective:** robust safeguarding when pupils are off-site.

Monitoring & Oversight

- Maintain a **PTTT Register** tracking: pupil count, duration/reason, attendance & wellbeing outcomes.
- Review PTTTs in **STAR Meetings** for multi-agency input and accountability.

Risks of Misuse

- Reduced sense of belonging.
- Delayed access to appropriate support (e.g., SEND assessment, CAMHS).
- Skewed data masking systemic issues.

Re-engaging Pupils: The Role of Exclusion in Attendance & Belonging

Fixed-term exclusions can disrupt belonging and connection. Reflect on practice to maintain relational safety.

Key Questions

- What behaviours currently warrant exclusion?
- Could **alternatives** address behaviour while sustaining connection?
- What impact does exclusion have on attendance, wellbeing, reintegration?

Attendance Implications

- Exclusion = missed learning; can depress overall attendance.

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- Returning pupils may feel disconnected, increasing risk of further absence.

Reintegration Support

- Use a **Welcome Back Pack** and a **Return to School Check-In**:
    - Positive message from a trusted adult
    - Summary of missed learning & catch-up steps
    - Wellbeing check-in sheet
    - Reminder of pastoral/mentor support
    - Short reflection: “What I have learned; what I need next”

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3. Strategic Systems: STAR Meetings & Data-Driven Planning

Improving attendance requires joined-up thinking. This strategy is built on two core systems: the **Strategic Team for Attendance & Referrals (STAR) Meetings**, which coordinate multi-agency support around each pupil, and **a data-driven planning cycle** that turns attendance insights into targeted action. Together, they create a coherent, consistent approach to improving attendance across the school.

3.1 Strategic Team for Attendance & Referrals (STAR) Meetings

STAR Meetings provide a structured, relational approach to coordinating support around pupils whose attendance, wellbeing, or engagement is causing concern. They bring together the key adults in a pupil's life — at school and beyond — to share information, identify barriers, and create a coordinated plan of support.

Purpose

To create a regular, multi-disciplinary forum focused on improving pupil attendance and punctuality through early identification, holistic understanding, and coordinated support.

Frequency

Every 2–3 weeks (adjustable based on school size and need).

Core Members

- **SENCO** – to provide insight into learning needs and barriers.
- **Attendance Officer** – to track patterns and initiate attendance procedures.
- **DSL/Safeguarding Team** – to identify and respond to safeguarding concerns.
- **Pastoral Lead / Head of Year** – to offer context and direct pupil support.

Focus Areas

- Pupils with **low attendance** or **frequent lateness**.
- Identifying **underlying issues** (e.g. mental health, family circumstances, SEN).
- Creating and reviewing **individualised action plans**.

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- Deciding on **appropriate interventions** or **referrals** (e.g. Early Help, LA involvement).

Meeting Format

1. **Review of Pupils** flagged since the last meeting.
2. **Discussion** of each pupil's situation, including:
    - Attendance data
    - Known safeguarding or SEN concerns
    - Recent school interactions
3. **Action Planning**:
    - Assign specific tasks (e.g. Attendance Officer to send Letter 1, Head of Year to call home).
    - Note any **exceptions** (e.g. delay sanctions due to known issues).
4. **Follow-Up**:
    - Review actions from previous meeting.
    - Assess impact on attendance/punctuality.
    - Adjust plan if needed.

Benefits

- Ensures **joined-up thinking** across departments.
- Reduces inappropriate or punitive responses.
- Builds a **shared understanding** of pupil needs.
- Promotes **early intervention** and **targeted support**.
- Strengthens the school's ability to make **informed referrals**.

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3.2 STAR Meetings in the Wider School Process

1. Identification & Referral

- **Weekly attendance data review** by Attendance Officer.
- Pupils flagged for:
    - Attendance below threshold (e.g. <90%)
    - Frequent lateness
    - Sudden drop in attendance
- Staff (e.g. tutors, teachers, pastoral leads) can also **refer pupils** to STAR via a simple form or email.

2. STAR Meeting Cycle (Every 2–3 Weeks)

- **Review referred pupils**.
- **Discuss context**: SEN, safeguarding, family issues, recent incidents.
- **Create action plans**:
    - Tailored interventions
    - Assigned responsibilities
    - Timeframes for review
- **Record decisions** in a shared document or system (e.g. CPOMS, Arbor).

3. Action Implementation

- Staff carry out assigned actions:
    - Attendance Officer sends letters or holds informal chats.
    - Head of Year makes home contact.
    - SENCO arranges support or assessment.
    - DSL checks for safeguarding concerns.
- Actions are **tracked** and **logged**.

4. Review & Escalation

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- At the next STAR meeting:
    - Review progress and impact.
    - Adjust plan if needed.
    - Decide if escalation is appropriate:
        - **Early Help referral**
        - **Attendance Support Team**
        - **Team Around the Family (TAF)**
        - **School-based support escalation**

5. Integration with Other Systems

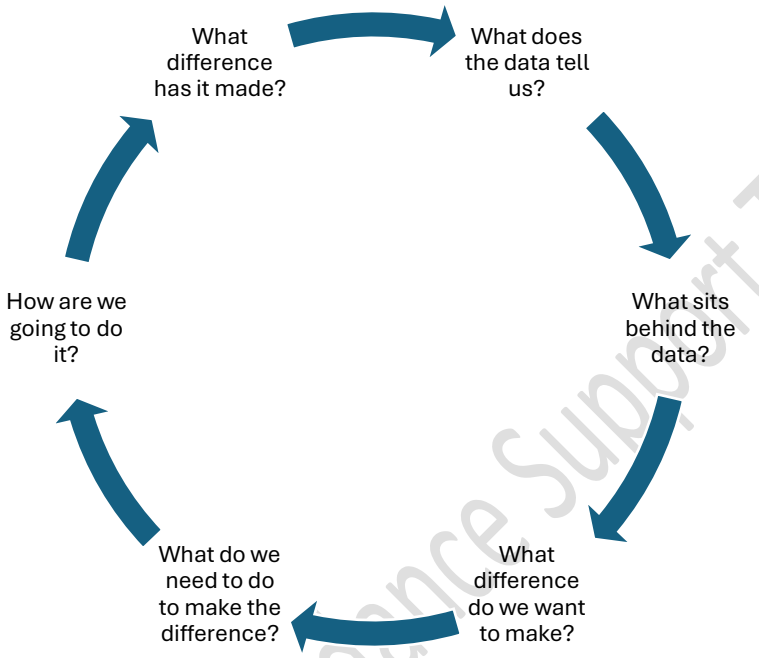
- STAR outcomes feed into:
    - **Pastoral team meetings**
    - **Safeguarding updates**
    - **SEN reviews**
    - **SLT briefings**
- Ensures **joined-up support** and avoids duplication.

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3.3 Data-Driven Planning

Data is a powerful tool for understanding patterns, targeting support, and celebrating success. When used thoughtfully, it shifts attitudes and builds a culture of shared responsibility for attendance.

The Reflective Cycle for Attendance Data



1. **What does the data tell us?**
    - Analyse attendance by year group, day of the week, time of year, and pupil group.
    - Identify patterns: frequent lateness, dips after holidays, persistent absence in specific cohorts.
    - Use both quantitative (percentages, codes) and qualitative (staff observations, pupil voice) data.
2. **What sits behind the data?**
    - Consider contextual factors: mental health, family circumstances, SEND needs, cultural practices.
    - Gather pupil voice to understand barriers and explore push/pull factors like relationships, curriculum engagement, and peer dynamics.
3. **What difference do we want to make?**
    - Define clear, measurable goals (e.g., reduce Code U absences in Year 9 by 20%).

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- Align goals with wider priorities such as wellbeing, inclusion, and safeguarding.
- Focus on equity — closing gaps, not just improving averages.

4. **What do we need to do?**
    - Identify interventions: mentoring, check-ins, family meetings, timetable adjustments, wellbeing support.
    - Prioritise using data: who needs help first, and what kind of help?
    - Include staff training and supervision to sustain efforts.
5. **How are we going to do it?**
    - Assign roles across pastoral, SEND, safeguarding, and leadership teams.
    - Plan timelines and review points (e.g., STAR Meetings every 2–3 weeks).
    - Communicate plans clearly to staff, pupils, and families to build buy-in.
6. **What difference has it made?**
    - Revisit data regularly to assess impact.
    - Celebrate improvements — even small wins — to build momentum.
    - Refine strategies based on what works and share learning across the school.

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3.4 Using DfE VYED to Strengthen Attendance Strategy

Schools should make full use of the DfE's View Your Education Data (VYED) platform to drive targeted, evidence-based action. Two key reports are especially valuable:

- **Absence Bandings Report**
  Breaks down attendance into 5% bands to identify pupils slipping into concerning patterns before they become persistently absent. Enables early intervention and tailored support.

Example school

Overall Absence Band	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
less than 5%	66%	53%	46%	42%	49%
5% to less than 10%	19%	23%	23%	22%	22%
10% to less than 15%	5%	8%	8%	7%	17%
15% to less than 20%	3%	7%	12%	5%	4%
20% to less than 25%	2%	2%	4%	7%	3%
25% to less than 30%	1%	3%	2%	4%	1%
30% to less than 35%	1%	1%	2%	2%	0%
35% to less than 40%	1%	0%	1%	1%	2%
40% to less than 45%	1%	1%	2%	4%	0%
45% to less than 50%	1%	1%	0%	2%	0%
50% and above (severely absent)	2%	1%	2%	4%	3%
10% and above (persistently absent)	15%	24%	32%	36%	29%

- **Similar Schools Report**
  Benchmarks your school against 20 statistically similar schools and provides an **Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE)**. Encourages reflective practice and fair comparison.

Questions for Schools Using VYED

- **Initial Analysis:**
  What proportion of pupils are in the 95%+ band? Who is missing 5–15% of the time? Which year groups are most concerning?
- **Deeper Analysis:**
  Why are some bands better or worse? Which pupils are easiest to move up? What does data show by pupil premium, SEND, gender, ethnicity? Are pupils moving up bands over time?

3.5 Absence Bandings

Tiered Response and Impact Awareness

Schools should develop a **clear, proportionate, data-informed response** for each 5% attendance band identified through VYED.
The purpose of a tiered approach is to ensure that support **escalates in line with risk**, enabling schools to act early, target resources effectively, and prevent pupils from drifting into persistent or severe absence.

A shared framework for response helps staff apply interventions consistently, communicate expectations confidently with families, and maintain a focus on **support before sanction**.

Why Understanding Impact Matters

Before determining appropriate responses, it is essential that **staff and families share a clear understanding of what attendance percentages mean in real terms**.

For many, percentages can feel abstract, making it difficult to recognise when absence is becoming concerning. Translating attendance bands into **days and weeks missed across a full school year** supports more meaningful conversations, reinforces the urgency of early intervention, and reduces the risk of attendance concerns being minimised or misunderstood.

Table 1 illustrates how each 5% attendance band translates into missed learning time over the course of a full academic year.

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Table 1. Range of Possible Days and Weeks Missed

Absence Band	Days Missed	Weeks Missed
0–5%	0 – 9.5	0 – 1.9
5–10%	9.5 – 19	1.9 – 3.8
10–15%	19 – 28.5	3.8 – 5.7
15–20%	28.5 – 38	5.7 – 7.6 (≈ half a term)
20–25%	38 – 47.5	7.6 – 9.5
25–30%	47.5 – 57	9.5 – 11.4
30–35%	57 – 66.5	11.4 – 13.3
35–40%	66.5 – 76	13.3 – 15.2 (≈ full term)
40–45%	76 – 85.5	15.2 – 17.1
45–50%	85.5 – 95	17.1 – 19
>50%	>95	>19

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3.6 Tiered Response by Attendance Banding

The table below sets out a **graduated model of support** aligned to each attendance band. As attendance declines, intervention becomes **more structured, intensive, and multi-agency in nature**, ensuring that pupils facing greater barriers receive the level of help they need.

This approach supports schools to avoid both over- and under-responding, make effective use of staff capacity, and align attendance action with wider safeguarding, SEND, and wellbeing systems.

Table 2. Tiered Response by Absence Banding

Band	Attendance Range	Suggested Actions
1	100–95%	Celebrate and reinforce good habits through Check-Out routines, praise postcards, assemblies.
2	94.9–90%	Monitor closely. Use Check-Up activities, light-touch mentoring, wellbeing check-ins. Aim to prevent drop below 90%.
3	89.9–85%	Early intervention: family phone calls, short attendance plans, mentoring. Focus on quick wins.
4	84.9–80%	Increase support intensity. Multi-agency input if barriers are complex. Consider SEND review/EBSNA screening.
5	79.9–75%	Structured reintegration planning, weekly reviews, home visits, wellbeing check-ins. Use Return to School Check-In.
6	74.9–70%	Crisis-level response: external services (e.g. CAMHS, social care). Consider time-limited PTTT with reintegration goals.
7	69.9–65%	Persistent absence with complex needs: multi-agency panels, trauma-informed strategies, EHCP review if needed.
8	64.9–60%	Deep disengagement: bespoke curriculum, family support services, safeguarding involvement.
9	59.9–55%	Chronic absence: attendance contracts, legal threshold review, intensive family work.
10	54.9–50%	Half-time attendance: therapeutic and relational approaches, structured reintegration.

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11	Below 50%	Severe absence: persistent absence protocols, safeguarding escalation, alternative provision pathways.

What This Means for Schools

Using a tiered model ensures that schools:

- Apply **fair, proportionate responses**
- Use **data** to target support effectively
- Provide **timely intervention** before persistent absence develops
- Combine relational support with robust systems
- Align attendance work with **STAR Meetings** and multi-agency practice
- Strengthen trust with families through clearer communication

This approach turns attendance data into actionable insight — ensuring every pupil receives the right support at the right time.

3.7 Using the Similar Schools Report to Inform Attendance Strategy

The AI-powered **Similar Schools Attendance Report** (available via DfE VYED) helps schools benchmark attendance against 20 similar schools based on pupil characteristics. It now includes **ABIEs**—Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectations—tailored to each school's context.

What Is It?

- Uses AI to identify 20 similar mainstream schools for attendance comparison.
- Includes an indicative ABIE—the minimum expected attendance improvement for your school this year.
- Anonymous comparisons, but names high-performing schools with better attendance.
- Updated at the end of each half-term and term.
- Accessible to mainstream schools, trusts, and LAs (not special schools).

How Are Schools Matched? Schools are matched based on:

- FSM eligibility

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- SEN support & type
- SEMH needs
- EAL status
- IDACI deprivation index
- Region & urban/rural classification
- Per-pupil funding

What Can You See?

- Your school's position among 20 similar schools
- Persistent absence rate comparison
- Attendance trends (YTD vs. previous year)
- Filters by: Year group, FSM, SEN, EAL, Ethnicity, Cared For Children, Child Protection, etc.

How to Use It

- Sign in via DfE VYED – Monitor your school attendance
- Go to Similar Schools Report
- Use filters to analyse pupil groups
- Compare current figure vs. last year
- Download charts and data for meetings and planning

Why It Matters

- **Fair benchmarking:** Considers factors beyond the school's control.
- **Targeted support:** Highlights pupil groups needing intervention.
- **Strategic planning:** Integrates with STAR Meetings, Check-Up routines, and attendance strategy.
- **ABIE-focused:** Shows whether you are on track with your tailored improvement expectation.
- **Collaboration:** Identifies higher-performing peer schools for sharing best practice.

Tips for Schools

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- Review ABIE and similar schools comparison together to understand performance gaps.
- Focus on the 5–15% absence band to prevent escalation.
- Share ABIE insights and context with staff and families for transparency.
- Combine this with the Absence Bandings Report for a deeper attendance picture.

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4. Targeted Support for Vulnerable Groups

Attendance barriers are rarely one-size-fits-all. Vulnerable pupils often face **complex, overlapping challenges** that require personalised, compassionate strategies. This section outlines practical approaches for key groups.

4.1 Pupils with SEND

Pupils with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) may face unique barriers to attendance. Schools must adopt inclusive, personalised strategies that align with the Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) framework to ensure every child feels safe, supported, and motivated to attend.

SEND-Inclusive Attendance Strategies

1. Personalised Check-In Systems

- Adapt the *Check In, Check Up, Check Out* model using visual schedules, simplified language, and sensory-friendly spaces.
- Involve key adults such as SENCOs, TAs, and pastoral staff to build trust and consistency.

2. Attendance Anxiety Support

- Recognise school-based anxiety and sensory overload as legitimate barriers.
- Offer flexible start times, quiet arrival spaces, and transition plans.

3. Family Partnership Plans

- Co-create attendance support plans with families, valuing their expertise.
- Use accessible formats like Easy Read, translated materials, and visual aids.

5. Celebrating Small Wins

- Track and celebrate incremental improvements in attendance.
- Use positive reinforcement and pupil-led goal setting.

6. SEND-Specific Events

- Host events for families of SEND pupils to share strategies and build community.
- Include multi-agency input (e.g. CAMHS, ASD advisors, educational psychologists).

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4.2 Pupils with EAL

These pupils may be new to the UK, unfamiliar with the education system, and navigating language barriers that affect attendance and engagement.

Strategies:

- Host **multilingual welcome events** with translated materials and interpreters.
- Create **buddy systems** pairing EAL pupils with peers who speak the same language or are trained to support newcomers.
- Provide **visual guides** and translated attendance policies to help families understand expectations.

Why it matters:
Language barriers can lead to misunderstandings, isolation, and missed opportunities. Proactive support builds trust and inclusion.

4.3 Refugee & Asylum-Seeking Pupils

These pupils may have experienced trauma, displacement, and instability. They often face complex emotional and practical barriers to attendance.

Strategies:

- Offer **trauma-informed support** through pastoral care and counselling.
- Develop **flexible integration plans** that allow gradual re-engagement with school life.
- Partner with organisations like **Hillingdon Refugee Support Group (HRSG)** to provide wraparound care and cultural understanding.
- Ensure staff receive **training on refugee experiences** and safeguarding considerations.

Why it matters:
A safe, welcoming school environment can be a stabilising force for refugee pupils and their families.

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4.4 Young Carers

Young carers often miss school due to responsibilities at home, such as caring for a parent or sibling. Their attendance may fluctuate based on family needs.

Strategies:

- Create **flexible attendance plans** that accommodate caring duties.
- Offer **mentoring and check-ins** to provide emotional support and practical advice.
- Connect with **Young Carers services** for assessments, respite opportunities, and family support.
- Raise awareness among staff and pupils to reduce stigma and promote understanding.

Why it matters:
Supporting young carers helps them balance education with home responsibilities and prevents long-term disengagement.

4.5 Pupils with Mental Health Needs

Mental health challenges such as anxiety, depression, or trauma can significantly impact attendance and punctuality.

Strategies:

- Embed **mental health check-ins** into daily routines (e.g. tutor time, pastoral sessions).
- Create **safe spaces** in school for regulation and reflection.
- Train staff in **mental health first aid** and referral pathways (e.g. CAMHS, Stronger Families Hub).
- Use pupil voice to co-design wellbeing initiatives and reduce stigma.

Why it matters:
Early intervention and emotional safety are key to helping pupils feel able to attend and engage.

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4.6 Understanding Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) describes a pattern where children and young people struggle to attend school due to emotional distress. It includes full absence and **partial patterns** (e.g., avoiding specific lessons, times, or people). EBSNA is **not a diagnosis**—it is a signal that emotional needs are not being met.

"School refusal occurs when stress exceeds support, when risks are greater than resilience and when 'pull' factors that promote school non-attendance overcome the 'push' factors that encourage attendance."
— Thambirajah et al., 2008

Context & Prevalence

- Persistent absence remains elevated post-COVID.
- Severe absence cases (missing ≥49% of sessions) indicate high emotional need.
- Social isolation is a significant health risk—making **belonging** a protective factor.

What Drives EBSNA?
EBSNA is multifaceted and commonly arises from interacting **emotional/cognitive**, **environmental/relational**, and **reinforcement** factors.

1. Emotional & Cognitive Factors

- **High anxiety / low mood:** panic before school, Sunday anxiety, morning somatic complaints.
- **Poor emotional regulation:** outbursts, shutdowns when overwhelmed.
- **Low self-efficacy:** "I'll fail anyway—what's the point?"
- **Fight/flight/freeze:** bolting, hiding, freezing at the door.
- **Executive function challenges:** organisation, transitions, working memory.

What schools can do:

- Recognise non-attendance as a **coping strategy**, not defiance.
- Build emotional literacy and self-belief.
- Use anxiety thermometers, emotion coaching, **Zones of Regulation**.

2. Environmental & Relational Factors

- **Bullying/peer conflict:** school feels unsafe.

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- **Staff relationships:** fear of being shouted at; feeling misunderstood.
- **Transitions/change:** phase moves, timetable shifts, loss of key adult.
- **Exam pressure/academic stress:** avoidance of assessments.
- **Sensory overload:** noise, crowding, glare; particularly for neurodiverse pupils.
- **Family stress/bereavement:** illness, separation, financial hardship.
- **Neurodiversity (e.g., autism/ADHD):** masking, shutdowns; need predictability.

What schools can do:

- Create **safe spaces** and trusted adult networks.
- Offer predictable routines and visual supports.
- Use person-centred planning and transition scaffolds.
- Collaborate with families to understand the full picture.

3. Reinforcement Patterns (Kearney & Silberman, 1990)

- **Avoiding discomfort (negative):** staying home reduces anxiety.
- **Escaping pressure (negative):** avoids exams/group work.
- **Seeking attention/avoiding separation (positive):** more time with caregiver.
- **Accessing preferred activities (positive):** games/social media during school hours.

Use this lens to:

- Identify what maintains non-attendance.
- Tailor interventions to underlying functions.
- Avoid inadvertently rewarding avoidance at home.

Push and Pull Factors

Push towards attendance	Pull towards non-attendance
Positive staff relationships	Anxiety / mental health challenges
Feeling safe and included	Bullying / conflict
Enjoyment of learning	Comfort/safety at home

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Supportive peers	Low motivation/purpose
Clear routines	Unmet sensory/emotional needs

Supporting EBSNA: Practical Steps

Prevention

- Promote belonging (connection, inclusion, safety).
- Teach regulation (Zones of Regulation, Emotion Coaching).
- Build resilience (e.g., BoingBoing's Resilient Therapy).
- Maintain predictable routines and compassionate boundaries.

Identification

- Wellbeing check-ins; pupil voice surveys.
- Monitor early signs: sporadic absence, somatic complaints, door-line distress.
- Coordinate via **STAR Meetings**; triangulate pupil/family/staff views.
- Consider **push/pull** factors.

Intervention

- Co-create **SMART goals** and a **graded reintegration** plan.
- Use **SUDS** (Subjective Units of Distress Scale) hierarchies to scaffold exposure.
- Offer **Return to School Check-Ins** and **Fresh Start** meetings after prolonged absence.
- Ensure **safe spaces** and trusted adults are available.
- Collaborate with families; avoid punitive responses—prioritise empathy, consistency, connection.

Note: EBSNA must be approached case-by-case. Use this as a foundation for personalised planning.

Cross-Referencing EBSNA Across the Strategy

- **Part-Time Timetables:** short-term, structured, reviewed; align with STAR actions; retain **Check In/Check Up/Check Out** routines.
- **Return to School Check-In:** warm greeting; catch-up support; offer **Welcome Back Pack**.

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- **STAR Meetings:** record emotional/relational/environmental drivers; include SEND/safeguarding/pastoral.
- **SEND & Mental Health:** align with **Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP)**; consider CAMHS/ASD advisors.

4.7 Pupils in Temporary Accommodation

These pupils may face disrupted routines, transport issues, overcrowded living conditions, and lack of basic resources — all of which affect attendance, punctuality, and engagement.

Current Context (from Housing Team):

- Due to high demand, families are sometimes placed far from the borough — including areas like High Wycombe and Luton.
- Families may receive as little as **24 hours' notice** to move, often with the aim of relocating them closer to Hillingdon.
- Housing prioritises **property availability**, not individual family circumstances.
- The availability of **3–4 bedroom properties is limited**, making larger families more vulnerable to frequent moves.
- Housing cannot confirm how long a family will remain in a particular location.

Strategies:

- Offer uniform, breakfast, and travel support to reduce practical barriers.
- Liaise with housing teams, Early Help services, and social workers to coordinate wraparound support.
- Provide discreet access to resources (e.g. uniform exchange, food parcels, hygiene kits) to reduce stigma.
- Ensure staff are aware of the signs of housing instability (e.g. frequent moves, tiredness, lateness) and respond with empathy.
- Use **Check-In, Check-Up, Check-Out** routines to maintain connection and relational safety — even if pupils are temporarily unable to attend.
- Provide **remote learning packs or online access** to help pupils stay engaged and reduce anxiety about falling behind.
- Consider flexible start times or temporary attendance plans during periods of transition.
- Include housing status in **STAR Meeting discussions** to ensure multi-agency awareness and planning.

Why it matters:
Housing instability can lead to chronic stress, disrupted sleep, and emotional

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exhaustion. Pupils may struggle to concentrate, feel embarrassed, or avoid school altogether. When placed far from school, they may feel disconnected and anxious about falling behind. Schools can be a consistent, stabilising force — offering dignity, routine, and connection when everything else feels uncertain.

4.8 Children with a Social Worker and Cared For Children (Previously Known as Looked After Children)

Children with a social worker and those who are cared for often face complex challenges that can significantly impact their attendance. These pupils may experience instability, trauma, or disrupted routines, making consistent school attendance more difficult. Schools have a vital role in providing stability, connection, and proactive support.

Strategic Considerations

- Recognise these pupils as a **priority group** in your attendance strategy.
- Align support with statutory guidance, including the **Virtual School Head's role** and the **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** framework.
- Ensure attendance data for these pupils is regularly reviewed at **STAR Meetings** and included in strategic planning.

Practical Actions

- **Named adult** to monitor and support attendance for each child with a social worker or cared for child.
- Embed **Check-In, Check-Up, Check-Out** routines for relational safety.
- Provide **flexible support** (e.g., breakfast clubs, transport help, therapeutic mentoring).
- Maintain **multi-agency collaboration** with social workers, carers, and Virtual School Heads.

Supportive Culture

- Use **relational approaches**, not punitive responses.
- **Celebrate small wins** and progress.
- Train staff in **trauma-informed practice** and the impact of care experience.

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4.9 Cultural & Community-Specific Attendance Challenges

Targeted Support for Communities Disproportionately Affected by Holiday Penalty Notices

Key Insight:

Borough data for the 2024–2025 academic year indicates that Indian families received the highest number of Holiday Penalty Notices (HPNs) issued for unauthorised leave of ten or more sessions, with **610 penalties**, compared to **139 penalties** issued to Pakistani families, the next highest group. While this data does not explain individual circumstances, it highlights a disproportionate impact and underlines the importance of **culturally informed, proactive communication** with families around attendance expectations and term-time leave.

Strategic Response:

Schools should embed culturally sensitive, data-informed strategies into their attendance work:

1. Community-Specific Engagement

- Host inclusive events for Indian families with:
    - Multilingual speakers (e.g. Gujarati, Punjabi, Konkani).
    - Clear messaging on the impact of missed education.
    - Advice on travel planning and legal implications.

2. Proactive Communication

- Use termly **Check-In** to ask about upcoming travel.
- Include travel declaration forms and offer support.
- Share reminders before peak travel seasons via social media and newsletters.

3. Cultural Awareness Training

- Provide CPD for staff on cultural norms around travel.
- Equip staff to have empathetic conversations with families.

4. STAR Meeting Integration

- Use STAR Meetings to flag pupils at risk of unauthorised leave.
- Invite community representatives to contribute to solutions.

5. Celebrating Positive Change

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- Share success stories of families who chose education over travel.
- Recognise improved attendance in **Check-Out** activities.

Targeted Community Connection Events

Building trusted relationships with specific parent and carer groups is a powerful way to strengthen attendance culture. When schools create culturally relevant, inclusive spaces for families, they reduce barriers, improve understanding, and foster a genuine sense of partnership.

Purpose

To strengthen relationships with parent/carer groups whose children are disproportionately affected by low attendance by hosting tailored, community-specific events that build trust, celebrate identity, and share key attendance messages.

Approach

1. Use Data to Identify Priority Groups

Analyse attendance data to understand which communities or cohorts may need additional support — for example, **Year 9 Indian pupils whose first language is Konkani** or any group showing a pattern of persistent or increasing absence.
Data should drive decisions about **who to invite**, **what support to offer**, and **which languages or cultural considerations are important**.

2. Host Community-Specific After-School Events

Organise after-school events designed around the needs and strengths of each community. Ensure they are accessible for working families and delivered in a warm, welcoming atmosphere.

Features may include:

- Food or refreshments that reflect cultural preferences.
- Speeches, storytelling, or Q&A led by staff, alumni, or guest speakers who share the community's language or cultural background.
- Clear, friendly messages about attendance, punctuality, expectations, and available support.
- Introductions to key staff (e.g. Attendance Officer, Pastoral Lead, Family Liaison).
- Translation, bilingual staff, or community interpreters to support understanding and inclusion.

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3. Expected Outcomes

- Stronger trust and engagement between families and the school.
- Increased understanding of school systems, routines, and support pathways.
- Improved attendance through stronger relationships, shared messages, and culturally sensitive communication.

4.10 Religious Leave: Respecting Faith While Supporting Attendance

Context:
Many families take authorised leave for religious observance (e.g., Eid, Diwali, Vaisakhi), but some extend this leave informally, citing tiredness or extended celebrations. While understandable, this can contribute to attendance dips that affect learning and engagement.

Strategic Response

1. Clear Communication of Policy

- Explain:
    - The number of authorised days allowed for religious observance.
    - The importance of returning promptly after celebrations.
    - The impact of extended absence on learning and routines.

2. Pre-Festivity Engagement

- Use Check-In activities before major religious events to:
    - Acknowledge and celebrate upcoming festivities.
    - Discuss expectations around attendance.
    - Offer support for managing tiredness or transitions.

3. Post-Festivity Support

- Use Check-Up activities to:
    - Welcome pupils back warmly.
    - Provide light-touch wellbeing support.

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- Reconnect pupils with routines and learning.

4. Community Collaboration

- Work with faith leaders and community reps to:
  - Reinforce messages about the value of education.
  - Encourage families to plan celebrations around school attendance.
  - Share joint messages via social media or newsletters.

5. STAR Meeting Integration

- Identify patterns of extended religious leave.
- Offer targeted support to families where this is recurring.
- Avoid punitive approaches; focus on understanding and solutions.

Quick Tip: Include cultural and religious observance dates in your attendance calendar and share reminders with families well in advance.

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5. Practical Support Through Community Partnerships

Purpose:

To ensure no child misses school due to lack of essential resources, and to build a network of support around families by connecting them with trusted local partners and charities.

5.1 Uniform Exchange Scheme: "Pass It On"

Purpose:

To ensure every student has access to clean, well-fitting school uniform by encouraging families to donate good-quality items they no longer need.

How It Works:

1. Donation Points

- Set up clearly marked donation bins in school reception or at events like parents' evenings.
- Accept clean, gently used items such as blazers, jumpers, trousers, skirts, PE kits, and shoes.

2. Uniform Hub

- Create a small, discreet "Uniform Hub" or cupboard where families can request or collect items.
- Run it weekly or termly, staffed by volunteers or pastoral staff.

3. Promotion

- Use newsletters, texts, and social media to:
    - Encourage donations
    - Let families know how to access the service
    - Share stories of impact (anonymously, if needed)

4. Respect and Dignity

- No questions asked—families can take what they need.

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- Offer private appointments or collection options to reduce stigma.

5. Incentives

- Consider small thank-you tokens for donors (e.g. house points for students, raffle entries for parents).
- Celebrate the environmental impact (e.g. "X kg of clothing reused this term!").

5.2 Access to Alarm Clocks

Why it matters:
Lack of a reliable alarm clock can lead to persistent lateness, especially in households with multiple children or shift-working parents.

Actions:

- Partner with local businesses or charities to source donated or low-cost alarm clocks.
- Include alarm clocks in welcome packs for families identified as needing support.
- Offer guidance on sleep hygiene and morning routines during pastoral check-ins.
- Consider a "Wake Up & Win" incentive for improved punctuality.

5.3 Sanitary Products

Why it matters:
Period poverty can lead to missed school days and feelings of shame or exclusion.

Actions:

- Work with organisations like **The Red Box Project**, **Period Poverty**, or local health services.
- Place free sanitary products in accessible, discreet locations (e.g. toilets, pastoral offices).
- Ensure staff are trained to respond sensitively and without judgment.

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- Include reusable options where appropriate and offer education on menstrual health.

5.4 Food Parcels

Why it matters:
Hunger affects concentration, behaviour, and attendance. Families facing food insecurity may also struggle with transport or uniform costs.

Actions:

- Build relationships with local food banks, mutual aid groups, or supermarkets.
- Offer emergency food parcels through pastoral teams or STAR referrals.
- Create a "quiet cupboard" or collection point for families to access food discreetly.
- Include culturally appropriate and allergy-aware options.
- Link families to longer-term support like free school meals or community kitchens.

5.5 SIM Cards, Data & Devices

Why it matters:
Digital exclusion can prevent children from accessing homework, online learning, or school communications.

Actions:

- Partner with digital inclusion charities like **Good Things Foundation**, **Digital Poverty Alliance**, or local tech firms.
- Provide SIM cards, data top-ups, or refurbished tablets/laptops to families in need.
- Offer digital literacy workshops for parents/carers.
- Ensure school platforms (e.g. Google Classroom) are mobile-friendly and easy to navigate.

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- Include tech support contacts in newsletters or welcome packs.

5.6 Partnership Mapping & Sustainability

Why it matters:
Strong partnerships multiply impact and help schools respond quickly to emerging needs.

Actions:

- Map local organisations and services already working in your area.
- Invite partners to parent events, or coffee mornings.
- Create a referral pathway or contact list for staff to use.
- Celebrate partnerships in newsletters, assemblies, and social media.
- Offer feedback to partners on the impact of their support (e.g. improved attendance, reduced stigma).

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6. Communication & Engagement

Effective communication with families and pupils is central to improving attendance. The DfE Attendance Toolkit highlights that **consistent, personalised, and empathetic messaging** can influence behaviour, strengthen relationships, and support sustained attendance improvement.

This section outlines how schools can build a strong culture of attendance through **pupil voice, family engagement, and behavioural messaging**, underpinned by relational, inclusive, and culturally sensitive practice.

6.1 Pupil Voice, Engagement & Recognition

Supporting attendance means empowering pupils with simple, accessible tools that build ownership, confidence, and emotional literacy. The most effective approaches are simple, consistent, and embedded within everyday routines.

6.1.1 Attendance & Wellbeing Journal

The Attendance & Wellbeing Journal is the **central pupil-facing tool** supporting the **Check In, Check Up, Check Out** framework. It provides pupils with a structured space to reflect on their feelings, attendance, and goals, while enabling staff to identify emerging emotional or practical barriers early.

Purpose

- Create predictable routines that support emotional readiness.
- Give pupils a safe space to express worries, wins, or changing motivation.
- Provide staff with early insight into anxiety, dysregulation, or developing barriers.
- Build pupil agency over attendance and celebrate progress.

Weekly Format (aligned to Check In, Check Up, Check Out)

- **Monday – How I feel today (Check In)**: short mood/energy reflection.
- **Wednesday – What's going well? (Check Up)**: progress, relationships, routines.
- **Friday – What I'm proud of (Check Out)**: effort, consistency, growth.

Additional sections

- Attendance tracker (days attended / late)
- Weekly goal setting

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- Reflection notes (requests for support)

Formats for Different Phases

- **Primary:** standalone booklet with visual prompts, emotion icons, drawing space, simple language.
- **Secondary:** planner-integrated prompts aligned to tutor time; concise, low-burden writing.

Implementation

- **When:** Tutor time on Mon/Wed/Fri (5–7 minutes); Friday share-back in pairs or small groups.
- **Who:** Tutors lead; LSAs support identified pupils; Attendance Officer scans weekly for flags.
- **How often:** Weekly, every week (term-time).
- **Storage:** In trays/tutor cupboards (primary) or planners (secondary).
- **Safeguarding route:** Any disclosures → follow school policy; record appropriately (e.g., CPOMS).

If concerns arise

- Tutor notes concern → quick same-day check-in.
- If pattern persists (2+ weeks), add to **STAR** list for discussion.
- Consider EBSNA screen/SEND needs if anxiety/dysregulation is frequent.

How to monitor impact

- Track "journal completion rate" by tutor group.
- Note pupils who move from "no entry" → "consistent entries".
- Link improvements to movement **up** an attendance band over half term.

6.1.2 Other Pupil-Facing Tools

Mood meters & calm start cards

- Visual check-ins to express emotion or request support discreetly.
- Display mood meters in classrooms; provide calm start cards for regulated entry.

Belonging pledge

- Short personalised statement capturing strengths, values, and goals.

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- Display in tutor rooms or inside planners to reinforce identity and connection.

Check-In conversation prompts

- Simple cue cards for tutors/mentors (3–5 questions).
- Use during morning routines, mentoring, or after absence.

Implementation

- **When:** Morning arrival; post-transition; after absence; mentoring slots.
- **Who:** Tutors, LSAs, mentors; Attendance Ambassadors can support peers.
- **How often:** As needed; minimum weekly for identified pupils.
- **Escalation:** Repeated "low mood" flags → pastoral review → possible STAR referral.

How to monitor impact

- Note reduced late arrivals post calm-start use.
- Track pupils moving from "red/amber" → "amber/green" on mood meters across weeks.
- Look for improved readiness to learn (teacher feedback).

6.1.3 Recognising and Celebrating Progress

Attendance culture is built by recognising **effort, growth, and resilience**, not just perfection.

Effort over perfection — message

- Many pupils face emotional, practical, or social barriers. Recognising small steps communicates: **"Your effort matters."**

What schools can celebrate (with ready-to-use phrasing)

- **Resilience** – "You came in even though you were feeling anxious — that took real courage."
- **Improvement** – "Three days in a row after a difficult week — that's excellent progress."
- **Kindness** – "You helped a friend feel welcome and settled — that kindness makes a difference."

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- **Punctuality** – "You arrived on time every day this week — that's a great routine you're building."

Practical recognition ideas

- Personalised praise (quiet 1:1, handwritten notes)
- Classroom shout-outs with visual trackers (star charts, progress thermometers)
- Certificates & postcards home (including "Most Improved" / "Attendance Hero")
- Low-value privileges (Golden Tickets: lunch queue, seat choice, helping role)

Implementation

- **When:** Friday Check Out; end-of-term assemblies; at key "fresh start" moments.
- **Who:** Tutors (weekly), Heads of Year (fortnightly), SLT/pastoral (half-termly).
- **How often:** Weekly acknowledgement for targeted pupils; wider recognition half-termly.

Safeguards

- Do not withdraw recognition as punishment.
- Ensure partial timetables or medical needs pupils remain eligible.
- Balance public and private recognition to suit pupil preference.

How to monitor impact

- Count recognition touches per pupil (avoid bias or over-focus on "easy to praise").
- Track link between recognition and reduced lates/absences over 4–6 weeks.
- Use pupil voice to refine what feels meaningful.

6.1.4 Strengthening Student Voice

When pupils feel heard, they are more likely to attend.

Attendance Ambassadors

- Role model routines; co-deliver assemblies; welcome new pupils; support peers.

Feedback loops

- Short surveys; suggestion boxes; focus groups; digital forms.

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- Ask: What helps? What's hard? What would make mornings easier?

Co-create solutions

- Rewards, morning routines, messaging, and support pathways designed with pupils.

Implementation

- **When:** Half-termly ambassador meetings; termly surveys; monthly focus groups.
- **Who:** Pastoral lead/HoY leads; Attendance Ambassadors co-facilitate.
- **Follow-up:** Publish "You said / We did" to close the loop.

How to monitor impact

- Track actions arising from pupil voice and completion status.
- Note attendance changes for ambassador cohorts and focus-group participants.

6.2 Family Engagement and Communication

Families are central to shaping attitudes to school. A relational, respectful, and culturally sensitive approach builds trust and shared responsibility.

6.2.1 Principles for Effective Communication

- **Timely and regular** — act early on emerging patterns; maintain rhythm of contact.
- **Personalised and specific** — use names and concrete numbers (e.g., "12 lessons missed").
- **Empathetic and non-judgemental** — solution-focused, warm, and curious.
- **Inclusive and accessible** — translation, alternative formats, disability-aware.
- **Future-focused** — frame benefits beyond academics (belonging, routine, wellbeing).

Implementation

- **When:** Weekly data reviews trigger supportive contact.
- **Who:** Attendance Officer initiates; Tutors and HoY follow up; DSL/SENCO looped as needed.
- **How often:** Light-touch cadence (e.g., fortnightly) unless concern escalates.

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How to monitor impact

- Track response rate/time to response; note change in attendance in 4–6 weeks.
- Check equity by pupil group (EAL, SEND, vulnerable cohorts).

6.2.2 Deepening Family Engagement

Positive contact first

- Build trust before difficulties arise: praise messages, postcards, expressions of thanks, sharing small wins.

Supportive home visits & check-ins

- For persistent absence: home/phone/virtual visits focused on **"How can we help?"** not blame.

Remove language barriers

- Use bilingual staff/community translators; translate letters and invites; website translation tools; basic greetings in home languages.

Respectful use of names

- Correct spelling/pronunciation; avoid anglicising unless invited.

Avoid assumptions

- Use "parent/carer"; ask, don't guess, about roles or routines.

Recognise and thank families

- Acknowledge engagement and improvements; celebrate joint effort.

Suggested communication sequence (before formal escalation)

1. Positive contact → 2) Informal check-in → 3) Supportive conversation → 4) Agree actions → 5) Review at STAR.
   (Use letters/sanctions only after this, unless safeguarding requires otherwise.)

Implementation

- **When:** As soon as a pattern emerges (within 1 week).
- **Who:** Tutor/HoY initial contact; Attendance Officer coordinates sequence; DSL/SENCO looped for need.
- **Record:** Brief note of contact and agreed actions.

How to monitor impact

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- Weekly: track agreed actions met/not met.
- Half-termly: compare attendance for families with early positive contact vs control.

6.2.3 Improving Access to School Communication

Weekly drop-in clinics for parents/carers

- Virtual/phone/in-person; 10–15 min slots; consistent weekly time; simple booking form.

Implementation

- **Who:** Heads of Year/pastoral; Attendance Officer schedules and advertises.
- **Promotion:** Website banner, texts, social media, translated invites.
- **Follow-up:** Note actions and outcomes; share quick thank-you message.

How to monitor impact

- Uptake rate; common themes; resolution time; subsequent attendance shifts.

6.2.4 Parent Communication Strategy

Channel	Advantages
Text messages	Quick, direct, high engagement; easy to personalise
Emails & letters	Formal detail; attachments; audit trail
Phone calls	Rapport; two-way nuance; sensitive issues
Social media	Broad reach; celebration; reminders; pupil voice
In-person meetings	Trust building; co-planning support
Translated materials	Clarity for EAL; inclusion; fewer misunderstandings
Drop-in clinics	Accessible; early intervention; reduces escalation

Implementation

- **Cadence:** Set a termly communication calendar (key messages, events, fresh-start nudges).
- **Ownership:** Attendance Officer curates; HoY/Tutors deliver; SLT oversight.

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- **Accessibility:** Translators/interpretation and accessible formats planned in advance.

How to monitor impact

- Track engagement by channel; A/B test message formats; review by pupil group.

6.3 Behavioural Messaging and Nudges

Behavioural insights show that **simple, personalised messages** can significantly improve attendance, particularly for pupils below 95%.

6.3.1 Messaging to Parents and Carers

Why it works

- Parents often underestimate absence.
- Percentages feel abstract; specific numbers feel real.
- Personalisation increases engagement and follow-through.

How to do it

- Use names; use **numbers not percentages**; keep it short and supportive.
- Send at **fresh-start moments** (start of term, after holidays, Mondays).
- Provide a clear route to help (drop-in, mentor, email/phone contact).

Targeting and frequency

- **<90%**: weekly supportive message for 3–4 weeks, then review.
- **90–95%**: termly check-in, plus after any dip.
- **>95%**: celebration/maintenance nudges at key points.

If there is no response

- Follow up with a **human conversation** (not more automated texts).
- Consider barriers (language, shift work, digital access, trust).

Example messages

- "Hi [Parent Name], quick update — [Child Name] has missed **12 days** this year (over **60 lessons**). We're here to help. Could we arrange a short check-in?"

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- "Thank you — [Child Name] has attended **every day this week**. Great momentum. Let us know if any support would help keep this going."

Implementation

- **Who:** Attendance Officer drafts; tutors personalise; system sends (MIS/comms platform).
- **When:** Mondays 9–10am (parents most responsive); avoid late evenings.
- **Data source:** Weekly VYED/MIS extract.

How to monitor impact

- Track reply rates, click-through to booking forms, and 4–6 week attendance change.
- Compare message types (numbers vs percentages; supportive vs neutral tone).

6.3.2 Pupil-Facing Behavioural Nudges

Visual Reminders

Use bold, positive visuals across school spaces, planners, and digital screens to normalise good attendance habits and reinforce belonging.

Examples of effective messages:

- "Every day counts — even Fridays."
- "Your future self will thank you for showing up."
- "You belong here."
- "One day makes a difference."
- "Turning up is an achievement."
- "Attendance builds opportunities."
- "Small routines lead to big futures."

Where to use them:

- Corridor screens and noticeboards
- Classroom doors and tutor rooms
- Planner front covers or inserts
- Digital signage near entrances

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Design tip:
Include pupil voice quotes, friendly icons, or peer-designed graphics to increase relatability and ownership.

Fresh Start Stickers

Fresh start stickers reinforce the idea that **every day is a new opportunity**, especially after periods of absence or difficulty.

When to use:

- First day back after absence
- Start of term or half term
- Monday mornings
- After a difficult week

Examples:

- "Today is a new start."
- "Glad you're here."
- "You showed up — that matters."
- "One day stronger."
- "Fresh week, fresh start."
- "You've got this."

Stickers can be placed on planners, water bottles, pencil cases, or handed out discreetly during arrival.

Termly Goal Cards

Support pupils to set **one simple, achievable goal** related to attendance or punctuality, reviewed at the end of each term.

Examples of goals:

- "I will attend school every Monday this term."
- "I will arrive before 8:45am four days a week."
- "I will ask for help when I start to feel anxious."

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- "I will aim to be on time every lesson this fortnight."

Use in practice:

- Set goals in tutor time or mentoring
- Store in planners or journals
- Review and celebrate progress at the end of term

These cards help pupils connect daily behaviour to longer-term success.

Relatable Data Posters

Help pupils understand the real-world impact of absence by converting statistics into **tangible, recognisable comparisons**.

Examples:

- "Missing just one extra day of school each term between Years 7–11 could cost you around £750 in future earnings." *That's about the same as:*
    - 8 pairs of Nike Air trainers
    - An iPhone
    - A weekend away with friends
- "Pupils who are persistently absent in Years 10 and 11 may earn up to £10,000 less per year by their late twenties." *That's the difference between:*
    - Renting and owning a home
    - A gap year and staying local
    - Getting your first-choice job or missing out

Design tip:
Use clear icons, images of real objects, and pupil-suggested comparisons. These work well as posters, planner inserts, or short social media slides.

QR Codes for Instant Support

QR codes make support **easy, discreet, and immediate**, especially for pupils who find it hard to ask for help in person.

QR codes can link to:

- Wellbeing and mental health resources

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- School attendance support contacts
- Calm start routines or arrival guidance
- School policies explained simply
- Pupil-created “Why I Show Up” videos
- Anonymous feedback or check-ins

Where to place QR codes:

- Planners
- Tutor room displays
- Corridor posters
- Stickers or lanyard cards

Scanning should take pupils directly to **support, not punishment**.

6.3.3 Social Media and Digital Engagement

Use social media (Instagram, Facebook, TikTok, X, YouTube) to:

- Share positive attendance messages and pupil voice clips.
- Celebrate pupil/family effort.
- Promote events and support (breakfast club, mentoring, translated resources).

Best practices

- Post consistently with visuals; include real voices; translate key posts; ensure accessibility; follow safeguarding and consent policies.

Engagement ideas

- Polls (“What helps you get to school on time?”)
- “Why I Show Up” reels
- Attendance myth-busting series
- Weekly shout-outs and highlights

Implementation

- **Who:** Pastoral/attendance lead curates; comms/IT schedules; pupils co-create.
- **When:** Two to three posts weekly; key moments on Sundays and Mondays.

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- **Safeguards:** Consent logs, moderation rules, and rapid takedown process.

How to monitor impact

- Track reach/engagement; correlate with attendance trends after campaigns.
- Note family queries/support uptake following posts.

6.4 Key Actions for Schools

✓ Create a **parent communication calendar** with translated, accessible formats.
✓ Train staff in **empathetic, inclusive language** (scripts, scenarios, supervision).
✓ Embed the **Attendance & Wellbeing Journal** in tutor routines (audit completion).
✓ Run **weekly drop-in clinics** and **publish themes/actions**.
✓ Use **behavioural messages** with numbers, not percentages; review fortnightly.
✓ **Recognise effort** weekly; ensure equity in who is acknowledged.
✓ Review **Section 6 effectiveness in STAR Meetings**: what's working, for whom, how do we adapt?

Measuring impact (review in STAR/SLT)

- Attendance and punctuality trends by year group and key cohorts.
- Movement **up** attendance bands following Section 6 interventions.
- Parent response rates and time-to-resolution.
- Pupil voice indicators (readiness to learn, sense of belonging).
- Equity checks (SEND, EAL, FSM, children with a social worker).

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7. Implementation Plan & Calendar

Turning strategy into action requires clear timelines, shared ownership, and consistent routines. This section provides a practical roadmap for embedding the attendance framework across the academic year so that practice is sustained, coherent, and responsive to pupil and family needs.

7.1 Yearly Implementation Timeline

7.1.1 Termly Calendar

Autumn Term

- Launch the **Check In, Check Up, Check Out** framework
- Hold **Fresh Start Conversations** with pupils and families
- Begin **weekly parent and carer drop-in clinics**
- Deliver the first **attendance curriculum lesson**
- Introduce **low-value rewards** and **recognition boards**

Spring Term

- Review the impact of **breakfast clubs** and **outdoor spaces**
- Expand **pupil voice initiatives** and the **Attendance Ambassador programme**
- Host **family engagement workshops**

Summer Term

- Review attendance data and **celebrate progress**
- Deliver **Year 6–7 transition activities**
- Prepare **Welcome Back Packs** and **Fresh Start meetings** for September

Tip: Embed Check In, Check Up, Check Out within pastoral programmes and align activity with **STAR Meeting cycles**. A sample week-by-week calendar is included in the appendix.

7.1.2 Key Stakeholders

- **Senior Leadership Team (SLT)** – Strategic oversight and accountability
- **Attendance Officer** – Data monitoring, coordination, and early intervention

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- **Pastoral Leads / Heads of Year** – Pupil support, mentoring, and follow-up
- **SENCO** – SEND adjustments and inclusion
- **Families** – Engagement and shared responsibility
- **Community Partners** – Practical and wellbeing support

7.1.3 Resources Needed

- Staff time for mentoring, check-ins, and drop-ins
- Materials for rewards, Welcome Packs, and displays
- Breakfast club supplies and outdoor equipment
- Data tracking and survey tools
- CPD focused on **relational**, **inclusive**, and **trauma-informed** practice

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7.1.4 Governance & Review

- Review implementation termly through **STAR Meetings** and **SLT**
- Share progress through staff briefings and governor updates
- Capture learning to refine provision in the following term

7.2 Attendance Curriculum Lessons

7.2.1 Purpose

Embedding attendance and punctuality within the curriculum helps pupils understand impact, explore barriers, and develop ownership of routines and habits that support regular attendance.

7.2.2 Enhanced Curriculum Schedule

Autumn 1 – Why Attendance Matters
Objective: Understand the link between attendance and achievement.
Activities: Data detective task, myth-busting quiz, pupil discussion.

Autumn 2 – The Ripple Effect of Absence
Objective: Explore how absence affects peers, staff, and learning.
Activities: Role-play scenarios, group debate, visual mapping.

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Spring 1 – Barriers to Attendance
Objective: Identify common barriers and co-create solutions.
Activities: Anonymous survey, brainstorm wall, guest speaker.

Spring 2 – The Power of Punctuality
Objective: Build understanding of routines and wellbeing.
Activities: Morning routine planner, punctuality pledge, peer interviews.

Summer 1 – Attendance and Your Future
Objective: Link attendance to aspirations and opportunity.
Activities: Alumni Q&A, career mapping, aspiration posters.

Summer 2 – Celebrating Success and Building Habits
Objective: Reflect, celebrate, and set goals for the next year.
Activities: Attendance bingo, gratitude journaling, celebration assembly.

7.2.3 Interactive Activities to Include

- Scenario role-plays
- Attendance Tracker Challenge
- Debates (e.g. "Should attendance be rewarded?")
- Data Detective (using anonymised data)
- Guest speaker Q&A
- Morning routine planners
- Attendance bingo or quizzes

7.2.4 Implementation

- **When:** One attendance-focused lesson per half term, with short tutor-time reinforcement
- **Who:** PSHE lead coordinates; tutors and Heads of Year deliver
- **Resources:** Slides, task sheets, anonymised attendance data

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7.2.5 Monitoring & Impact

- Pupil reflections and evaluations
- Changes in attendance and punctuality after lessons

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- Feedback used to adapt future content

7.3 Breakfast Clubs: Fuel for Learning and Connection

A free breakfast club can be a powerful tool for improving attendance, punctuality, and wellbeing. By offering a welcoming space at the start of the day, schools can help pupils arrive on time, begin the day with nourishment, and feel part of a caring community.

However, breakfast clubs are **not just about food — they are about connection**.

We recommend that staff **sit amongst pupils during breakfast**, rather than supervising from a distance. This simple act makes staff more visible, approachable, and human, creating informal opportunities for conversation, relationship-building, and early intervention.

When pupils feel comfortable around staff, they are more likely to:

- Share concerns before they escalate
- Ask for help when needed
- Feel a stronger sense of belonging

This proactive approach can prevent emerging issues from developing into attendance difficulties and gives staff valuable insight into pupils' lived experiences, fostering empathy and trust.

A breakfast club does not need to be expensive or complex. Its effectiveness lies in being:

- **Consistent** – available every day
- **Inclusive** – open to all pupils without stigma
- **Relational** – focused on connection rather than supervision

At its heart, a breakfast club should be rooted in a simple belief:
every child deserves a positive start to their day.

Implementation considerations

- Open 30–45 minutes before registration
- Create a warm, calm environment with quieter spaces
- Rotate pastoral and attendance staff
- Ensure dietary needs and safeguarding routes are clear

Monitoring impact

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- Track punctuality and attendance of regular attendees
- Log informal interventions that prevent escalation
- Gather pupil voice on readiness to learn and belonging

7.4 Teaching Tech Habits for Better Punctuality

Many pupils report being late because they stay up late on their phones or forget to set alarms. While phones can be a barrier to punctuality, they can also be powerful tools — **if pupils are taught how to use them effectively**.

7.4.1 Practical Habits to Teach

1. **Smart Alarm Use**

- Set weekday alarm schedules
- Turn alarms off during holidays and reactivate before term
- Reinforce reminders during Check In routines

2. **Do Not Disturb Mode**

- Set automatic quiet hours to reduce late-night notifications

3. **Wind Down Mode**

- Reduce blue light
- Limit app access
- Encourage sleep-friendly routines

4. **Curriculum Integration**

- Teach phone settings during PSHE or tutor time
- Use peer-led sessions or Digital Wellbeing Ambassadors

5. **Post-Holiday Check-In**

- Reflect on sleep routines
- Reactivate alarms on first day back

Why it matters: better sleep supports punctuality, and punctuality supports attendance.

Monitoring impact

- Track lateness before and after delivery

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- Use pupil feedback on sleep and routines

7.5 Exam Readiness & Punctuality (KS4)

Exams can trigger anxiety and disengagement, particularly for pupils with high absence who feel it is "too late". Embedding exam readiness within the attendance strategy helps pupils feel supported, capable, and connected.

Strategic focus

- Prioritise KS4 pupils
- Use data to identify risk early

Practical actions

- Low-stakes mock exams
- Teaching exam-day routines
- Clear messaging about punctuality expectations
- Revision clubs and wellbeing drop-ins
- Personalised re-engagement pathways

Supportive culture

- Frame exams as growth opportunities
- Celebrate effort and progress
- Use Check In activities to surface concerns
- Train staff to recognise exam anxiety

7.6 Fresh Start Conversations

The start of a new academic year is a vital opportunity to reset expectations and rebuild trust with pupils and families who struggled previously. A structured, tiered approach helps pupils feel supported rather than judged and reinforces the message that everyone begins again at 100%.

Purpose

- Acknowledge past challenges without blame
- Reinforce a fresh start

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- Offer tailored support early

Tiered meeting approach

Previous Attendance	Staff Involved
Below 50%	Headteacher
50–70%	Senior Leadership Team
70–85%	Head of Year / Phase Lead
85–90%	Tutor / Class Teacher

Conversation focus

- "We know last year was difficult — this is a fresh start."
- "You're starting at 100%."
- "How can we help this year?"

Follow-up

- Agree simple goals
- Offer check-ins or mentoring
- Celebrate early successes

7.7 Strengthening Transitions (Primary → Secondary)

7.7.1 Why Transition Matters

The transition to secondary school is a pivotal point in a pupil's journey, involving changes to routines, social dynamics, independence, and identity. Attendance commonly dips at this stage, making the start of Year 7 a crucial opportunity to establish habits, relationships, and a sense of belonging.

7.7.2 Beyond a Single Day: A Week-Long Transition Programme

A one-day induction is rarely sufficient to meet pupils' emotional and practical needs. A **week-long programme in July** allows pupils to build familiarity, relationships, and confidence in a low-pressure environment, while still having time to rest before September.

The programme should be inclusive, relational, and reassuring.

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Core components include:

- Friendship-building activities and peer mentoring
- Introductions to key pastoral, SEN, safeguarding, and attendance staff
- School orientation activities
- Routine rehearsal
- Belonging and identity workshops
- Daily Check-In circles

Additional features:

- Targeted support for pupils with attendance or emotional needs
- Flexible starts for pupils with SEND or EBSNA indicators
- Family engagement through welcome packs and translated materials
- Staff debriefs to plan follow-up support

7.7.3 Early Intervention Through Collaboration

Proactive collaboration between primary and secondary schools is essential and should begin in the summer term.

Effective collaboration includes:

- Joint planning meetings
- Pupil profiles and transition passports
- Tailored transition planning
- Early family engagement
- Continuity of support
- Data-driven monitoring through STAR Meetings

Embedding Belonging from Day One

Transition support should continue beyond induction. Schools should:

- Act on pupil voice
- Celebrate diversity

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- Train Year 7 staff in relational practice
- Monitor attendance closely and intervene early

Key Actions for Schools

✓ Share this plan with staff and stakeholders
✓ Schedule CPD on attendance culture
✓ Monitor impact termly
✓ Celebrate progress visibly and inclusively

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8. Measuring Impact

8.1 Purpose and Approach to Measuring Impact

To ensure the attendance strategy delivers meaningful and sustained improvement, schools should measure **both quantitative outcomes and qualitative experience**. This dual approach captures not only changes in attendance figures, but also the lived experiences of pupils, families, and staff.

By combining data with voice and reflection, schools can identify what is working, understand why it is working, and adapt practice where needed.

8.2 Quantitative Measures

Quantitative data provides an objective view of attendance patterns, trends, and improvement over time.

Schools should routinely monitor:

- Overall attendance rate
- Persistent absence figures
- Punctuality trends
- Attendance improvement among targeted groups (e.g. SEND, FSM, EAL)
- Engagement with interventions (e.g. breakfast clubs, mentoring, drop-in clinics)

These measures should be reviewed **termly** and, where possible, compared over time to assess sustained impact rather than short-term change.

8.3 Qualitative Measures

Quantitative data alone does not explain why attendance improves or declines. Qualitative measures help schools understand the **quality of relationships, sense of belonging, and effectiveness of support**.

Recommended qualitative measures include:

- Pupil voice surveys focused on belonging, safety, and wellbeing
- Staff feedback on attendance culture, confidence, and workload
- Parent and carer engagement levels (attendance at meetings, responsiveness, feedback)

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- Case studies illustrating individual pupil journeys and successful interventions

These insights are particularly valuable when evaluating relational and preventative strategies.

8.4 Success Indicators

Success should be measured through a combination of outcomes and experience-based indicators.

Key success indicators may include:

- Reduction in persistent absence
- Improved punctuality and routine consistency
- Increased sense of belonging reported by pupils
- Improved staff–pupil relationships
- Positive feedback from families
- Sustained improvements across multiple terms

Together, these indicators reflect both **impact and sustainability**.

8.5 Tools for Review and Evaluation

8.5.1 Logic Model

A logic model supports strategic evaluation by clearly linking:

Inputs → Activities → Outputs → Outcomes → Impact

For attendance work, this may include:

- Inputs: staff time, training, resources
- Activities: breakfast clubs, mentoring, curriculum lessons
- Outcomes: improved punctuality, engagement, confidence
- Impact: improved attendance and belonging over time

Using a logic model helps schools remain focused on purpose and avoid disconnected initiatives.

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8.5.2 Termly Attendance Strategy Review

Schools should conduct a structured review **at least termly** to assess progress and refine approach.

A review template may include:

- Data overview (attendance, absence, punctuality)
- Strategy implementation (what was delivered and how consistently)
- Pupil and family engagement
- Staff reflections and capacity
- Key learning and next steps

These reviews should inform planning for the following term and be aligned with **STAR Meeting cycles**.

Tip: Celebrate small wins alongside challenges to build momentum and maintain staff morale.

8.6 Using Findings to Refine Practice

Impact review is only meaningful if learning leads to action.

Schools should:

- Share findings with SLT and governors
- Use insights to refine strategy, staffing, and CPD
- Adjust interventions based on what works for different groups
- Highlight success stories to motivate pupils, families, and staff

This closes the loop between **evaluation and improvement**.

8.7 Measuring Impact at a Glance

Purpose
Track progress and refine strategies using data and feedback.

What to Measure

- **Quantitative:** Overall attendance, persistent absence, punctuality, group trends
- **Qualitative:** Pupil voice, staff reflections, family engagement, case studies

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Success Indicators

✓ Reduced persistent absence

✓ Increased pupil belonging

✓ Positive family feedback

✓ Sustained improvements over time

Key Tools

- Logic Model (inputs → impact)
- Termly Attendance Strategy Review Template

Quick Action Tip

Celebrate small wins publicly — through assemblies, newsletters, and social media — to reinforce progress and momentum.

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9. Staff Wellbeing, Peer Support & Supervision

Creating a culture of belonging is not only about pupils. It also depends on the wellbeing, emotional safety, and professional confidence of the staff who support them.

Attendance, pastoral, and safeguarding roles are emotionally demanding. Staff often manage persistent absence, complex family circumstances, safeguarding concerns, and high-stakes decisions, while maintaining trust, empathy, and consistency. When staff feel valued, equipped, and supported, they are better able to build meaningful relationships with pupils and families — the foundation of sustainable attendance improvement.

9.1 Why Staff Wellbeing Matters

Attendance work frequently involves:

- Emotionally charged conversations
- Safeguarding and child protection concerns
- Supporting families in crisis
- Responding to persistent and severe absence
- Navigating complex, multi-agency systems

Without appropriate support structures, staff may experience:

- Compassion fatigue and emotional exhaustion
- Burnout and reduced resilience
- Decision fatigue and anxiety over thresholds
- Reduced relational capacity with pupils and families
- Inconsistency in practice

Supporting pupils starts with **supporting the adults who care for them**.

9.2 Peer Support Networks

Attendance and pastoral staff benefit from **safe, collegial spaces** to share experiences, reduce isolation, and strengthen confidence.

Suggested approaches

- Weekly informal drop-ins for shared problem-solving

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- Peer mentoring for staff new to attendance or pastoral roles
- Quick-access online spaces (e.g. Teams or WhatsApp groups) for advice and encouragement
- Termly wellbeing circles focused on reflection, strengths, and resilience

Impact

- Builds connection and shared professional identity
- Reduces emotional load and isolation
- Encourages collective learning and consistency

9.3 Supervision and Reflective Practice

Supervision provides a structured, confidential opportunity for staff to **pause, reflect, and process emotionally complex work**.

Options include

- Monthly one-to-one supervision with a trained senior leader or external coach
- Group supervision following STAR Meetings or safeguarding reviews
- Reflective journalling or wellbeing logs for personal processing

A simple reflective structure may include:

- What has been challenging this month?
- What support did I have available?
- What might help next time?

Impact

- Supports emotional regulation
- Improves decision-making under pressure
- Strengthens relational practice with families

9.4 Recognition and Appreciation

Attendance and pastoral work often involves **invisible emotional labour**. Recognition boosts morale and reinforces the value of this work.

Ideas for schools

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- Shout-outs in staff briefings or newsletters
- Personal thank-you messages following challenging cases or home visits
- Celebrating milestones such as improved attendance in a year group
- A "Staff Impact Board" highlighting positive contributions

Impact

- Reinforces professional identity and purpose
- Builds motivation and belonging
- Helps staff feel seen and valued

9.5 Training for Emotional Resilience

High-quality CPD builds the emotional literacy and confidence staff need for challenging attendance conversations.

Suggested CPD themes

- Managing difficult conversations with families
- Understanding secondary trauma and emotional fatigue
- Emotional regulation and boundary-setting
- Trauma-informed approaches to attendance
- Input from social care or mental health professionals
- Role-play and case-study discussions to practise skills

Impact

- Improves consistency and professional confidence
- Strengthens relational approaches with families
- Helps safeguard staff wellbeing

9.6 Protected Time and Workload Management

Relational attendance work requires **time and realistic caseloads** to be effective.

Schools can support this by providing:

- Protected time for STAR preparation and follow-up

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- Dedicated time for calls, letters, and record-keeping
- Space within the working day for home visits
- Administrative support for routine tasks
- Flexibility during high-pressure periods or urgent cases

Impact

- Prevents burnout and overload
- Improves quality and consistency of intervention
- Enables timely, compassionate responses

9.7 Leadership Support

Senior leaders play a critical role in modelling care, understanding pressures, and creating the conditions for staff to thrive.

Leadership actions may include

- Regular wellbeing check-ins with attendance and pastoral staff
- Using supportive questions such as:
    - "How are you coping with the caseload?"
    - "Is there anything you need more support with?"
- Encouraging honest conversations about workload and emotional demand
- Including attendance staff in strategic decision-making
- Publicly celebrating attendance successes and staff effort

Impact

- Increases psychological safety
- Strengthens trust and team cohesion
- Builds a culture where staff feel valued and supported

9.8 Weekly Wellbeing Check-In

A simple, consistent wellbeing check-in can normalise reflection and strengthen a culture of care.

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Suggested prompt (5 minutes in team or line-management meetings):

- What has felt heavy this week?
- What has helped you cope?
- What do you need more of next week?

Regular use reinforces that emotional wellbeing is **everyone's responsibility**, not an afterthought.

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Appendices

The appendices provide ready-to-use tools, templates, and examples to support practical implementation of the attendance framework.

A. Attendance Risk Matrix

Purpose

Identify pupils at risk of persistent absence and **match support proportionately**. Use in **STAR Meetings**, pastoral reviews, safeguarding discussions, and whole-school monitoring.

How to use

Categorise pupils into **Green / Amber / Red** to guide proportional responses, escalation, and review cycles.

Sample Attendance Risk Matrix

Risk Level	Attendance Threshold	Key Indicators	Suggested Interventions
Green	**Above 95%**	• Consistent attendance and punctuality • No known barriers • Positive engagement	• Continue positive reinforcement • Celebrate effort through Check-Out routines • Monitor for changes
Amber	**90%–95%**	• Occasional absences or lateness • Emerging concerns (e.g. anxiety, family issues) • Dip in engagement or wellbeing	• Check-in with pupil and family • Offer mentoring, pastoral support, or Check-Up activities • Monitor attendance weekly
Red	**Below 90%**	• Persistent absence or frequent lateness • Known barriers (e.g. SEND, safeguarding, housing) • Disengagement or avoidance	• Add to STAR Meeting cycle • Multi-agency support (e.g. Early Help) • Create an Individual Attendance Plan • Consider escalation if no improvement

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B. STAR Meeting Templates (with Example Entries)

Purpose

Help staff prepare and record **Strategic Team for Attendance & Referrals (STAR)** decisions clearly and consistently.

How to use

Use the **Preparation Form** ahead of STAR; complete **Meeting Notes** during STAR. Adapt fields to your MIS.

B1. STAR Meeting Preparation Form

Field	Details (Example)
Pupil Name	Mira Al-Sayeed
Year Group	Year 9
Attendance Rate	82%
Key Concerns	• Frequent Monday/Friday absences • Anxiety/low mood
Known Factors	• SEND: ASC • EAL: Arabic • Recently moved to temporary accommodation
Staff Notes	Tutor notes disengagement; overwhelmed in noisy/crowded environments

B2. STAR Meeting Notes

Field	Details (Example)
Meeting Date	12 March 2026
Attendees	SENCO, Attendance Officer, DSL, Head of Year 9
Pupil Discussed	Mira Al-Sayeed
Discussion Summary	• DSL: no safeguarding concerns • SENCO: sensory sensitivities; recommend quiet arrival space • AO: Mon/Fri pattern • Housing instability barrier

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Agreed Actions	1) SENCO: morning check-in space. 2) AO: Letter 1 + weekly monitoring. 3) HoY: weekly mentoring. 4) DSL: liaise with Housing.
Follow-Up Date	26 March 2026

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C. Fresh Start Conversation Flowchart

Purpose

Guide tiered **Fresh Start** conversations in September (and for in-year admissions/returns to school) so pupils feel supported, not judged.

How to use

Assign meeting lead **by previous-year attendance band**. Keep language relational and solution-focused.

Flow

Step	Action
1. Identify Pupil	Pupils with low attendance the previous year, or those needing a reset at key points (e.g. after prolonged absence or behavioural challenges).
2. Schedule Fresh Start Meeting	Allocate staff according to previous attendance: • **Below 50%:** Headteacher • **50–70%:** SLT • **70–85%:** Head of Year / Phase Lead • **85–90%:** Tutor / Class Teacher
3. Prepare Key Talking Points	• Acknowledge last year without blame • Share the message: *"You start at 100% this year"* • Ask: *"What would help you this year?"* • Highlight support available
4. Hold the Fresh Start Conversation	• Use warm, relational language • Explore barriers with curiosity • Reinforce expectations kindly and clearly • Agree 1–2 small achievable goals
5. Create a Simple Support Plan	• Record agreed goals • Identify who will check in & how often • Note reasonable adjustments • Share with key staff
6. First Week Follow-Up Check-In	• Tutor/HOY checks in within the first week • Reinforce positives • Address emerging concerns early • Adjust the plan if needed

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7. Review at STAR Meeting Cycle	• Add to STAR cycle if appropriate • Review attendance, punctuality & engagement • Coordinate multi-agency support where needed
8. Celebrate Wins	• Praise effort and improvement • Send a postcard/text home • Highlight progress in Check-Out activities

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D. Logic Model (Theory of Change)

Purpose

Show how inputs and activities lead to short-term outcomes and long-term impact for attendance and belonging.

How to use

Build once; revisit each term to test assumptions and refine.

Inputs	Activities	Outputs	Short-Term Outcomes	Long-Term Impact
• **Staff CPD in relational and trauma-informed practice** • **Dedicated attendance and pastoral staff time** • **Breakfast club funding and resources** • **STAR Meeting structures and systems** • **Attendance data tools (MIS, DfE VYED)** • **Family engagement resources**	• **Check In, Check Up, Check Out** routines embedded weekly • Return to School Check-Ins following absence • Targeted mentoring and pastoral interventions • Breakfast clubs and calm start routines • Parent/carer drop-in clinics and workshops • Attendance curriculum lessons • Attendance messaging via newsletters and social media	• Increased pupil voice and emotional expression • Stronger staff–pupil and staff–family relationships • Earlier identification of attendance barriers • Personalised support and reintegration plans • Visibility of recognition and positive routines	• Improved punctuality and morning routines • Reduced unauthorised absence (including Code U) • Increased family engagement and responsiveness • Improved emotional regulation and readiness to learn • More pupils attending consistently	• Sustained reduction in persistent and severe absence • Improved attainment and progress over time • Stronger sense of belonging and inclusion • Safer, more supportive school culture • Attendance improvement maintained across academic years

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E. Termly Calendar (Week-by-Week)

Purpose

Provide a structured rhythm for the year. Aligns with **STAR cycles** and **Check In/Up/Out**.

How to use

Adapt to your term dates. Use for SLT, pastoral planning, and staff briefings.

Autumn 1 (example)

Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
Autumn 1	**Week 1**	**Check-In (Wellbeing)**	Launch framework, 1:1 pupil check-ins, community-building
	Week 2	Attendance Focus	Parent drop-in clinics **STAR Meetings:** R/Y1/Y7 (Tue), Y2/Y8 (Wed), Y3/Y9 (Thu)
	Week 3	**Check-Up (Wellbeing)**	Tutor reflections, wellbeing survey
	Week 4	Attendance Focus	Attendance curriculum lesson **STAR Meetings:** Y4/Y10 (Tue), Y5/Y11 (Wed), Y6/Sixth Form (Thu)
	Week 5	Attendance Focus	STAR Meeting prep, targeted support
	Week 6	Wellbeing	Rewards and recognition boards **STAR Meetings:** R/Y1/Y7 (Tue), Y2/Y8 (Wed), Y3/Y9 (Thu)
	Week 7	**Check-Out (Wellbeing)**	Celebration assembly, pupil journaling

Autumn 2

Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
Autumn 2	**Week 1**	**Check-In (Wellbeing)**	Reconnect after break, goal setting
	Week 2	Attendance Focus	Review attendance data **STAR Meetings:** Y4/Y10 (Tue), Y5/Y11 (Wed), Y6/Sixth Form (Thu)
	Week 3	**Check-Up (Wellbeing)**	Mid-term wellbeing check
	Week 4	Attendance Focus	Peer ambassador support **STAR Meetings:** R/Y1/Y7 (Tue), Y2/Y8 (Wed), Y3/Y9 (Thu)
	Week 5	Attendance Focus	STAR Meeting follow-up
	Week 6	Wellbeing	Wellbeing workshops and pupil voice **STAR Meetings:** Y4/Y10 (Tue), Y5/Y11 (Wed), Y6/Sixth Form (Thu)
	Week 7	**Check-Out (Wellbeing)**	End-of-term reflection and wellbeing packs

Spring 1

Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
Spring 1	**Week 1**	**Check-In (Wellbeing)**	Transition support, mentoring

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Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
	Week 2	Attendance Focus	Evaluate breakfast clubs and outdoor spaces **STAR Meetings:** R/Y1/Y7 (Tue), Y2/Y8 (Wed), Y3/Y9 (Thu)
	Week 3	**Check-Up (Wellbeing)**	Emotional regulation workshop
	Week 4	Attendance Focus	Expand student voice and ambassador programme **STAR Meetings:** Y4/Y10 (Tue), Y5/Y11 (Wed), Y6/Sixth Form (Thu)
	Week 5	Attendance Focus	Family engagement workshops
	Week 6	**Check-Out (Wellbeing)**	End-of-term celebration

Spring 2

Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
Spring 2	**Week 1**	**Check-In (Wellbeing)**	Return to School Check-In
	Week 2	Attendance Focus	Fab Friday rewards, parent engagement **STAR Meetings:** R/Y1/Y7 (Tue), Y2/Y8 (Wed), Y3/Y9 (Thu)
	Week 3	**Check-Up (Wellbeing)**	Tutor check-ins and pupil voice

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Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
	Week 4	Attendance Focus	STAR Meeting and targeted support **STAR Meetings:** Y4/Y10 (Tue), Y5/Y11 (Wed), Y6/Sixth Form (Thu)
	Week 5	Attendance Focus	Wellbeing scale activity
	Week 6	**Check-Out (Wellbeing)**	Resilience recognition and celebration

Summer 1

Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
Summer 1	**Week 1**	**Check-In (Wellbeing)**	Transition support and goal setting
	Week 2	Attendance Focus	Class Champs challenge **STAR Meetings:** R/Y1/Y7 (Tue), Y2/Y8 (Wed), Y3/Y9 (Thu)
	Week 3	**Check-Up (Wellbeing)**	Staff feedback and pupil voice
	Week 4	Attendance Focus	Review attendance data and celebrate progress **STAR Meetings:** Y4/Y10 (Tue), Y5/Y11 (Wed), Y6/Sixth Form (Thu)
	Week 5	Attendance Focus	Pupil-led wellbeing activities

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Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
	Week 6	**Check-Out (Wellbeing)**	Summer prep and celebration

Summer 2

Half Term	Week	Focus	Suggested Activities
Summer 2	**Week 1**	**Check-In (Wellbeing)**	Welcome back, transition prep
	Week 2	Attendance Focus	Final attendance push **STAR Meetings:** R/Y1/Y7 (Tue), Y2/Y8 (Wed), Y3/Y9 (Thu)
	Week 3	**Check-Up (Wellbeing)**	End-of-year wellbeing review
	Week 4	Attendance Focus	Community celebration **STAR Meetings:** Y4/Y10 (Tue), Y5/Y11 (Wed), Y6/Sixth Form (Thu)
	Week 5	Attendance Focus	Plan Year 6–7 transition week
	Week 6	**Check-Out (Wellbeing)**	Prepare Welcome Back Packs and Fresh Start meetings

Summer Break	**Week 1**	**Transition Week (Belonging & Routines)**	Week-long programme for incoming Year 7 pupils: orientation, friendship-

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			building, sample lessons, pastoral introductions, and celebration

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F. Sample Weekly Schedule

Purpose

Give staff a weekly rhythm combining prevention, support, recognition, and review.

Template

Day	Morning Activity *(Focus)*	Afternoon Activity *(Focus)*
Monday *(Check-In – Wellbeing)*	**Wellbeing Check-In:** Tutors greet pupils, ask "How are you feeling today?" and welcome back absentees.	**Community Circle:** Pupils share weekend highlights, worries, or goals.
Tuesday *(Attendance Focus)*	**Attendance Spotlight:** Share weekly attendance targets, highlight top attenders, and discuss barriers.	**Parent Engagement Drop-In:** Invite parents of pupils with low attendance for informal support.
Wednesday *(Check-Up – Wellbeing)*	**Midweek Wellbeing Check-Up:** Tutors ask "What's going well?" and "What's been tricky?"	**Pastoral Workshop:** Topics like stress, friendships, or asking for help.
Thursday *(Attendance Focus)*	**Attendance Data Review:** Tutors share class attendance trends and set mini goals.	**Peer Attendance Ambassadors:** Pupils support peers with punctuality or anxiety.
Friday *(Check-Out – Wellbeing)*	**Weekly Wellbeing Check-Out:** Reflect on emotional highs/lows, celebrate resilience, and preview next week's goals.	**Celebration & Reflection:** Certificates, shout-outs, and journaling or drawing activity.

G. Pupil Feedback Forms (Primary & Secondary)

Purpose

Capture pupil voice on belonging and attendance; compare trends over time and cohorts.

Primary (Belonging & Attendance)

- Simple ticks/emojis; prompts for “what helps” and “what would help more”.
- Includes items like “Do you feel welcome?”, “What makes it hard?”, “Ideas for school”.

Secondary (Belonging & Attendance)

- Likert scale + short answers; focuses on belonging, support routes, barriers, and ideas for change.

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G1. Primary Pupil Feedback Form - Belonging & Attendance

A simple, pupil-friendly version for EYFS / KS1 / KS2

Pupil Feedback Form: Belonging and Attendance (Primary)

We want to know how you feel about school and what helps you come in every day.

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1. About You

- **My name:** _____
- **My class:** _____

---

2. How I Feel About School

Do you feel welcome at school?

☀️ Yes ⛅ Sometimes 🌧️ No

What helps you feel happy at school?

Is there anything that would help you feel more included?

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3. Coming to School

What helps you come to school every day?
(Choose as many as you like)
☐ Seeing my friends
☐ My teacher
☐ Fun lessons
☐ Breakfast club
☐ Knowing someone will help me
☐ Other: _____

What makes it hard to come to school?

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What would help you come to school more often?

4. Your Ideas

What could the school do to help children feel happier coming to school?

Anything else you want to tell us?

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G2. Secondary Pupil Feedback Form - Belonging & Attendance

For KS3, KS4 and post-16

Pupil Feedback Form: Belonging and Attendance (Secondary)

Your feedback helps us understand what school feels like for you and how we can support you better.

---

1. About You

- **Year group:** _____
- **Tutor group:** _____

---

2. Belonging

Do you feel welcome at school?
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes

What helps you feel like you belong here?

What could school do to make it feel more inclusive?

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3. Attendance

What helps you come to school regularly?

What makes it hard to attend?

What support would help you attend more consistently?

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4. Ideas and Suggestions

What could the school do differently to help pupils attend?

Any other comments, suggestions, or ideas?

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H. Attendance & Wellbeing Journal Templates

Purpose

Embed weekly reflection and regulation aligned to **Check In, Check Up, Check Out**.

How to use

- **Primary:** standalone booklet with visual prompts and drawing space.
- **Secondary:** planner inserts with concise prompts and an attendance tracker.

Weekly layout (shared)

- **Monday – How I feel today**
- **Wednesday – What's going well?**
- **Friday – What I'm proud of**
- **My goal for next week**
- **Support I might need**
- **Attendance tracker (self):** Days in/Late
- **Attendance & Wellbeing Journal Template:**

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Week of: _____

📌 Monday – How I feel today

(choose or circle one)

- 😊 Happy
- 😐 OK
- 😕 Not sure
- 😟 Worried
- 😞 Sad
- 😤 Frustrated
- 😣 Overwhelmed

Why I feel this way:

📌 Wednesday – What's going well?

This week I am proud of:

Something that has helped me this week:

📌 Friday – What I'm proud of this week

This week, I achieved:

Next week, I want to:

📊 Attendance Tracker

Day	Arrived	On Time	Late	Notes
Mon	☐	☐	☐	_____

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Tue	☐	☐	☐	_____
Wed	☐	☐	☐	_____
Thu	☐	☐	☐	_____
Fri	☐	☐	☐	_____

🎯 **My Goal for Next Week**

Hillingdon Attendance Support Team

I. Staff Role Map

Purpose
Clarify "who does what" in attendance so actions are coordinated, not duplicated.

How to use
Complete for your school; share with staff; review termly.

Roles to include (with your text)

- **SLT Link for Attendance** — responsibilities, governance, CPD leadership
- **Data Manager/Admin** — coding accuracy, dashboards, flags
- **DSL** — safeguarding oversight, Early Help/social care
- **SENCO** — reasonable adjustments, SEND profiles, alignment with OAP
- **Attendance Officer** — daily monitoring, early intervention, family comms
- **Pastoral Lead** — mentoring, check-ins, Return to School Check-Ins
- **Head of Year** — year trends, STAR chairing, family relationships
- **Class Teacher/Tutor** — daily relationships, welcomes, informal Check-Ins
- **Attendance Ambassadors (students)** — peer culture, campaigns, welcoming new pupils

Attendance Support Team

Senior Leadership Team (SLT) Link for Attendance

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Champion attendance strategy at a strategic level • Ensure alignment with school improvement and safeguarding plans • Monitor whole-school trends and oversee escalation
Recommended Tasks	• Lead termly strategic reviews • Present attendance data to governors • Support staff CPD on relational and trauma-informed approaches

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Data Manager / Admin Support

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Ensure accurate recording and coding of attendance • Provide analysis for STAR Meetings and interventions • Maintain tracking systems for follow-up actions
Recommended Tasks	• Produce weekly attendance dashboards • Flag anomalies or trends to pastoral/attendance leads • Support communication logs and documentation

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Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Monitor safeguarding concerns impacting attendance • Ensure attendance issues are assessed within wider safeguarding context • Liaise with external agencies when concerns escalate
Recommended Tasks	• Review attendance alongside safeguarding logs • Attend STAR Meetings to provide safeguarding oversight • Coordinate Early Help or social care referrals

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Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO)

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Identify SEND-related barriers to attendance • Coordinate support plans and reasonable adjustments • Ensure alignment with the Ordinarily Available Provision (OAP) framework
Recommended Tasks	• Review attendance of pupils with EHCPs/SEN Support • Document and implement reasonable adjustments • Liaise with families and external specialists

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Attendance Officer

Category	Details

Attendance Support Team

Key Responsibilities	• Monitor daily attendance and identify patterns • Initiate early interventions and formal procedures • Communicate with families and track follow-up
Recommended Tasks	• Generate weekly STAR Meeting reports • Complete first-day calls and follow-ups • Maintain detailed records of interventions and outcomes

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Pastoral Lead

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Provide emotional and behavioural support • Lead mentoring and relational check-ins • Coordinate with families to address barriers
Recommended Tasks	• Conduct weekly pupil check-ins and mid-term Check-Ups • Facilitate Return to School Check-Ins after absence • Co-create support plans with pupils and families

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Head of Year

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Oversee attendance across their year group • Chair STAR Meetings and coordinate interventions • Support tutors and communicate with families
Recommended Tasks	• Monitor year-group trends and escalate when needed • Lead termly Check-Out reflections with tutors • Ensure consistent communication with parents/carers

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Class Teacher / Tutor

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Build daily relationships and monitor wellbeing • Welcome pupils back after absence • Communicate concerns to pastoral or attendance teams

Recommended Tasks	• Greet pupils warmly each morning • Conduct informal Check-Ins and Return to School conversations • Share observations during STAR Meetings or briefings

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Attendance Ambassador (Student Role)

Category	Details
Key Responsibilities	• Promote positive attendance culture among peers • Provide pupil voice on attendance barriers • Support new or struggling pupils with integration
Recommended Tasks	• Lead assemblies or tutor-time campaigns • Design attendance posters or messages • Welcome new pupils and support mentoring initiatives

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Hillingdon Attendance Support Team

J. Community Partnerships Directory

Purpose
Connect families to **local support** quickly; increase capacity beyond school.

How to use
Maintain a live directory; include referral routes and eligibility; review termly.

Suggested categories (with your Hillingdon examples/links)

1. Youth Services and Mentoring Organisations

- Provide mentoring, coaching, and engagement programmes for pupils at risk of disengagement.
- **Examples:** YMCA, The Prince's Trust, local youth clubs.
- **Hillingdon Example:** https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/youth

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2. Mental Health and Wellbeing Services

- Offer counselling, therapy, and mental health support for pupils and families.
- **Examples:** CAMHS, Mind, Kooth.
- **Hillingdon Example:** https://www.cnwl.nhs.uk/services/mental-health-services/child-and-adolescent/hillingdon-camhs

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3. Cultural and Language Support Organisations

- Support pupils and families with EAL and provide translation services.
- **Examples:** EMAS teams, refugee support charities.
- **Hillingdon Example:** https://www.hrsg.org.uk

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4. SEND Support Services

- Provide specialist advice and resources for pupils with SEND.
- **Hillingdon Example:** https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/send

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5. Housing and Family Support Services

- Support families experiencing homelessness or financial hardship.

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- **Hillingdon Example:** https://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/stronger-families

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6. Attendance and Inclusion Charities

- Offer training, resources, and direct support to improve attendance.
- **Examples:** School-Home Support, Attendance Works.

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7. Faith and Community Groups

- Provide trusted spaces for engagement and outreach.
- **Examples:** Local mosques, churches, temples, community centres.

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8. Employers and Alumni Networks

- Support careers education and motivation through talks and mentoring.

💡 **Tip:** Assign a staff member to coordinate partnerships and review impact termly.

J.1 Hillingdon Youth Offer: Universal & Targeted Programmes

The **Hillingdon Youth Offer** provides borough-wide universal and targeted programmes for ages 8–24, promoting connection, resilience, and engagement — all key drivers of improved attendance.

Universal Programmes

- Open to all young people aged 8–19 (up to 24 for SEND).
- Activities include sports, arts, games, and community projects.
- **Attendance Link:** Boosts wellbeing, reduces isolation, and builds positive associations with school.
  💡 Promote during Check-In and Check-Out sessions.

Targeted Programmes

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Free, referral-based support for pupils facing challenges such as trauma, anxiety, or identity issues.

Examples:

- AIMS Mentoring (11–19)
- BOUNCE (8–11)
- SWiTCh (Year 6–7 transition)
- Yoga for Wellness (15–21)
- LGBTQIA+ Drop-ins
  Attendance Link: Aligns with STAR referrals and personalised attendance plans.

Strategic Integration Tips

- Include Youth Offer links in Welcome Back Packs.
- Invite Youth Offer staff to parent events.
- Promote opportunities via social media.
- Track participation and review impact termly.

Key Actions for Schools

✓ Share appendices with all staff
✓ Integrate templates into daily routines
✓ Use CPD outlines for staff training
✓ Keep community directory updated termly

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K. Transition Week Outline (Year 6 → Year 7)

Purpose

Deliver a **week-long July programme** that builds belonging, routine, and confidence for incoming Year 7.

How to use

Run a five-day programme that balances **orientation**, **relationships**, **routines**, and **celebration**. Include targeted strands for SEND/EBSNA and pupils with prior absence.

Sample 5-Day Outline

Day	Theme	Activities
Day 1: Welcome & Orientation	Feeling safe and seen	Warm welcome from senior leaders and Year 7 staff Icebreaker games and team challenges Guided tour with pupil ambassadors Introduction to routines and expectations
Day 2: Belonging & Identity	Feeling valued and connected	Belonging workshops on values and identity Creative activities (e.g. "All About Me" posters, belonging trees) Meet key pastoral and safeguarding staff Check-In Circle
Day 3: Learning & Routines	Feeling capable and curious	Fun sample lessons in core subjects (e.g. Maths puzzles, Science experiments, English storytelling) Timetable simulation and classroom transitions Digital platform demos (homework portals, behaviour systems) Organisation and independence skills

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Day	Theme	Activities
Day 4: Confidence & Communication	Feeling empowered and supported	Team-building challenges and problem-solving games Peer mentoring with older pupils Role-play scenarios (asking for help, resolving conflict) Parent/carer drop-in session or workshop
Day 5: Celebration & Reflection	Feeling proud and ready	Pupil-led presentations or performances Certificates of participation and personal strengths Reflection activities ("What I'm proud of", "What I'm looking forward to") **Fun trip or outdoor activity** to end the week on a high Final emotional Check-Out Circle

Additional Features

- Targeted sessions for pupils with attendance/emotional needs
- Flexible start (half-day/small groups) for **SEND/EBSNA**
- Family engagement (welcome packs, translation, liaison staff)
- Staff debrief to plan September follow-up and early **STAR** review

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L. Attendance Culture Audit Tool

Purpose

The Attendance Culture Audit Tool supports schools to **reflect honestly on their current attendance culture**, identify strengths, and pinpoint areas for development across key domains. It is designed to move discussions beyond data alone and focus on the **relational, inclusive, and systemic factors** that influence attendance.

The tool can be used to guide:

- SLT strategic planning
- Staff CPD and reflective discussions
- Team and departmental reviews
- Whole-school attendance strategy audits

Schools may adapt the tool to suit their context, phase, and priorities.

How to Use the Audit

- Complete the audit **termly or annually** as part of attendance strategy review.
- Involve a **cross-section of staff** (e.g. SLT, attendance, pastoral, SEN, tutors).
- Use ratings to prompt **professional dialogue**, not judgement.
- Agree **2–3 priority actions** following each audit cycle.
- Revisit the audit to measure cultural change over time.

Attendance Culture Audit Tool (Copy-Ready Template)

1. Pupil Voice

Consider:

- Do pupils feel heard regarding attendance and wellbeing?
- Are there opportunities for pupils to co-create attendance strategies?
- Do pupils understand why attendance matters and how it affects their future?

Rating (1–5): _____

Notes / Evidence:

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2. Staff Practice

Consider:

- Do staff greet pupils warmly and consistently each day?
- Is lateness addressed with empathy rather than punishment?
- Are staff trained in relational, trauma-informed attendance approaches?

Rating (1–5): _____

Notes / Evidence:

3. Family Engagement

Consider:

- Is positive contact made with families before issues escalate?
- Are there regular opportunities for families to engage with attendance support?
- Do families understand attendance expectations and who to contact for help?

Rating (1–5): _____

Notes / Evidence:

4. Inclusive Strategies

Consider:

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- Are pupils with SEND supported through personalised attendance plans and reasonable adjustments?
- Are cultural and language needs considered in attendance responses?
- Are practical barriers (e.g. transport, uniform, sleep routines) identified and addressed early?

Rating (1–5): _____

Notes / Evidence:

5. Effective Use of Data

Consider:

- Is attendance data analysed regularly to identify patterns and target support?
- Are vulnerable groups (e.g. FSM, EAL, SEND, looked after pupils) monitored effectively?
- Is data used to celebrate progress and inform whole-school attendance priorities?

Rating (1–5): _____

Notes / Evidence:

Review and Next Steps

Following completion of the audit:

Key strengths identified:

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Priority areas for development (max. 3):

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

Agreed actions and ownership:

_____

_____

Review date: _____

_____

Link to Wider Strategy

This audit should be considered alongside:

- STAR Meeting outcomes
- Attendance data (including banding and VYED analysis)
- Pupil, staff, and family feedback
- The school's Check In, Check Up, Check Out framework

Used consistently, the Attendance Culture Audit Tool helps ensure that **attendance improvement is embedded as a shared, reflective, and inclusive part of school culture — not just a set of procedures**.

_____

Quick Actions for Schools (Appendices)

✓ Share appendices with all staff and save each as a **separate editable file**
✓ Integrate templates into **weekly routines** (tutor time, STAR prep, parent clinics)
✓ Use CPD outlines for regular **staff development**
✓ Keep the **community directory** updated **termly** and assign a named owner

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