The Department for Education has published new data on school attendance across local authorities in England – the first time such data has been published by the UK government since October.

The Education Policy Institute has published a new analysis paper on this data, as well as data from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner on the number of days of schooling lost by pupils.

The analysis considers how attendance rates and days of lost schooling vary across the country, and how they correlate with levels of disadvantage and prior GCSE results. The paper concludes by considering the implications for pupils’ learning, as well as government policy that seeks to mitigate learning loss. You can read the new paper [**here**](https://contacts.epi.org.uk/civicrm/mailing/url?u=3986&qid=339488)**.**

Falling behind in learning and the mental health impact of social isolation brought about through absence makes persistent absenteeism an exclusion risk factor. Schools will be working hard in the new year to prevent students who haven’t been able to attend because of the pandemic from becoming distanced from the belonging of school and regular non-attenders.

Hillingdon’s Participation Team have collected some ‘good practice’ examples that schools have been using around the country prior to March 2020 and since. We hope you find this useful.

We would also welcome examples of practise from Hillingdon schools so that we can share them more widely in the next update. It is important that we can continue to support each other during these difficult times. Please email any attendance strategies to: participation@hillingdon.gov.uk

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| School | Practice |
| Gov.uk | Improving attendance: support for schools and LAs – best practiceadvice on GOV.UK:<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-attendance/framework-for-securing-full-attendance-actions-for-schools-and-local-authorities> |
| Hillingdon School | The school use a weekly email where they name students with concerning behaviour, missing education, students who are under social care as well as those that they have concerns about. This is disseminated to the DSL, Senco, Heads of Years, SMT and the Participation Officer. For a Participation Officer this allows us to give advice and support on those that are absent due to medial reasons, chase and give advice on CME’s, identify support services that can meet a young person’s or family need and give advice and strategies around poor attendance to prevent attendance panels This frequent update can also identify a decline in attendance quicker than a school’s monthly return but please remember this is not a referral. |
| The Rise School | Youtube platform to communicate messages to parents – visual presentation to show plans etc & this has helped get the tone of support across stronger than a letter.  |
| London Gypsies & Travellers | Use the ‘voice note’ facility to contact parents who may not read English or have ‘free minutes to call the school’.  |
| Communicating with parents where English is not their first language | When typing letters or sending text messages, if you are aware of the parent’s first language, type the text you wish to send in word, then copy and paste it into Google translate in the left box. Select the parents first language you wish to translate it to and paste it in the right-hand section. Your text should now be translated, and you can now copy and paste the translated text for your use.  |
| Rush Green Primary School | A reward system for improved attendance: weekly attendance assemblies as well as a yearly raffle for 100% attendance |
| Belvedere Junior School | Persistent absentees are assigned a mentor to encourage their attendance to improve. |
| Squirrels Heath Junior School | Regular pupils, parent/carer and staff surveys to identify and address needs rapidly |
| Newport School | Relaunch of attendance procedures and protocols. A working party was set up which was made up a variety of staff, classroom attendance displays were created, half-termly 'attendance zoning' letters were given out and close support from SLT and the Admissions Officer were given to vulnerable families. |
| Rush Green Primary School | The Designated Safeguarding Lead pushed for rapid resolution of CP/CIN cases and championed attendance at case conferences and Early Help meetings.A reward system for improved attendance. |
| Chalkhill Primary School | To improve attendance, so that outcomes would improve, we introduced:‘First day call’ and started to collect children from home.  A daily breakfast club from 8am. Parent workshops with our Parent - Support Adviser to highlight the importance of attendance. Formal acknowledgement of improved attendance with letters home, tea parties, book prizes for termly 100% attendance and an iPad for 100% for the year. |
| Sybourn Primary School | Robust tracking and monitoring of attendance and punctuality for all disadvantaged children. |
| Rush Green Primary School | The additional deployment of a parent support advisor and attendance officer helped to get children in to school. Systems of rewards were used and where necessary, fines. Meetings with parents and teachers were carried out and additional early morning one-to-one tutoring was conducted before school, with monthly assessment to identify gaps and next steps. Breakfasts were offered to these children to encourage them to come. |
| Castle Hill Primary School | Created a range of Secret Clubs that targeted pupils are invited toCreated a family liaison officer for parentsDeveloped lots of non-threatening ways for parents to come into school, then moved this onto workshops and information sessionsCreated a mental health curriculum to help deal with pressures |
| Paddington Academy | Comprehensive parent information evenings, followed up with many parent meetings and Parents' Evenings Relentless focus on attendance and punctuality |
| The Difference | Collaboration with the pastoral leads, the schools’ use of data on learning, behaviour and attendance is now used more effectively and informs teachers in their approach to address engagement and mental health of pupils. Together with colleagues across SLT, we have put in place changes to the timetable and approach used when pupils are struggling, to keep them on track. In line-management, the SLT have supported, challenged and worked collaboratively to help staff problem-solve; and carried out teaching and learning observations with other senior leaders to improve trauma-informed approaches underpinning engagement. |

For statutory school age children:

If a child is removed from school without application for holiday/exceptional circumstance, then the school should:

* Contact parents and find out where the children are and if they are, they going to return (within 6 months). Keep on roll.
* If the parent says they are coming back, then the children need to be kept on roll and apply for HPN when they return.
* If the parent says they are not going to return, the school need to ascertain the new school details and confirm they are on roll there. Child must be in educational provision before off rolling.
* If the parent says they are away for a given period and want the child taken off roll, this cannot be done unless the parents provide evidence that the child is receiving a full time and appropriate education. This should be checked against any school identified by the parent or parent needs to send in a letter/email saying that they are home educating and taking full responsibility for the child’s education.
* There is no 20-day rule for those children whose parents have engaged with the school and identified that they will be returning (within 6 months).

If a child does not return to school following a holiday/exceptional leave, then the above process starts again but the 20-day rule may apply.