

A group of diverse students in school uniforms (white shirts, dark trousers/skirts, and striped ties) are walking down a set of stairs outdoors. The scene is brightly lit, suggesting a sunny day. The students are smiling and looking down the stairs.

BIRMINGHAM SCHOOL ATTENDANCE STRATEGY

2026-2029

'ATTENDANCE IS EVERYONE'S BUSINESS'
WORKING TOGETHER TO IMPROVE SCHOOL ATTENDANCE – WWW.GOV.UK

CONTENTS

Foreword - Cllr Brown & Dr Sue Harrison	3
1. Introduction	5
2. Context	6
2.1 National Context	6
2.2 Local Context	6
3. Why do we need a coordinated strategy for attendance	7
3.1 Why is regular attendance at school important?	7
3.2 What do we mean by 'good attendance'?	8
3.3 What do we mean by Persistent and Severe Absence?	8
3.4 What causes absence from school?	9
3.4.1 Lack of parental support for attendance	9
3.4.2 Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)	9
3.4.3 Children out of sight: the link to safeguarding	9
3.4.4 Attendance and disadvantaged pupils	10
4. Methodology	11
4.1 How we ensured that the strategy is fit for purpose	11
5 Birmingham's approach to improving attendance	12
5.1 Working with partners and stakeholders across the city	12
5.2 Priorities	13
5.2.1 Priority One: Developing a relational, values-led approach to attendance	14
5.2.2 Priority Two: Building a multi-agency attendance support offer	15
5.2.3 Priority Three: Communicating attendance as a high priority	16
6. Monitoring & Oversight	18
6.1 Strategic Role of Data	18
7. Accountability and Governance	19
8. Appendix	20
Glossary of terms	20

FOREWORD

We know that regular school attendance is the best indicator of children's outcomes in the long term. This is why improving attendance for all children in Birmingham is a priority.

When children are absent from school, much of the missed learning is never made up, placing children at a disadvantage from the outset. Poor attendance usually results in low attainment; therefore, good attendance is a priority to ensure that children will make good academic progress and achieve success.

The Department for Education introduced new statutory duties in August 2024, as set out in its guidance *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. This document outlines the responsibilities of all stakeholders, ensuring they understand and fulfil their roles in improving school attendance. This is illustrated below:

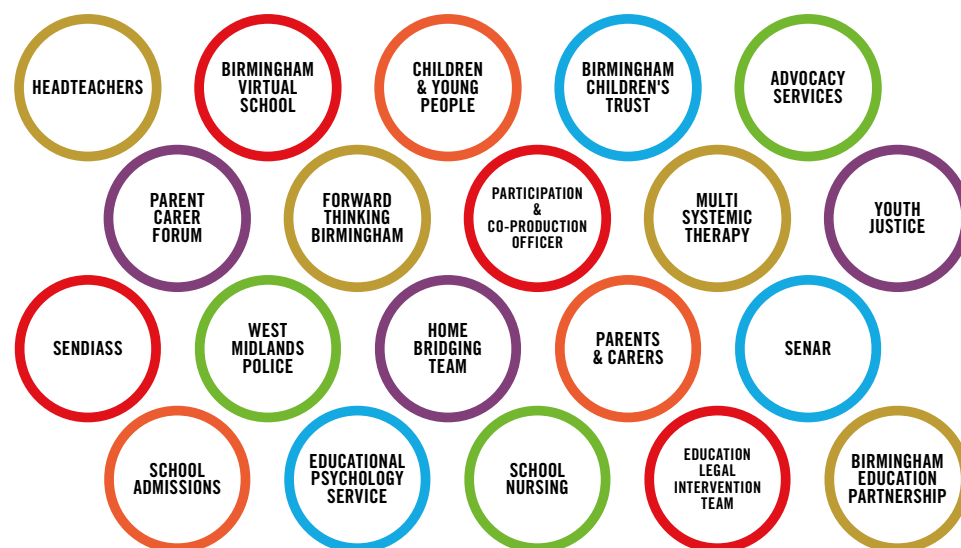
EXTERNAL AGENCIES	LOCAL AUTHORITY	SCHOOLS	PUPILS	PARENTS / CARERS
Support families, share relevant information, and contribute to early intervention and safeguarding efforts.	Provide support, coordinate multi-agency responses, monitor attendance data, and lead legal intervention where necessary.	Monitor attendance, maintain regular communication with families, offer pastoral support, and escalate concerns appropriately.	Attend school daily, follow school rules, and actively participate in learning.	Ensure their child receives full-time education appropriate to their age, ability, aptitude, and any special educational needs, either through regular school attendance or alternative provision. They should also communicate absences, engage with support services, and avoid term-time holidays.

Birmingham Children and Young People's Partnership is working together to understand and tackle the issues facing our city, so that our children and young people have the best possible life chances. Good school attendance is a building block of that improvement journey, and we must do all we can to remove the barriers that face our children and young people in the city to enable them to thrive in education settings. All children have a right to attend school and to be supported to have good attendance, and access to the range of opportunities.

The Partnership's vision, as outlined in the *Change for Children and Young People Plan 2023–2028*, is to make Birmingham a great place for children and young people to grow up and thrive.



This Attendance Strategy plays a vital role in delivering the outcomes set out in the plan. In developing the strategy, we have worked closely with schools, families, professionals, and community partners across Birmingham to understand both the strengths within the current system and the challenges we need to address. Through this collaborative approach, we have co-produced a set of priorities aimed at improving attendance for children and young people in Birmingham's schools.



We would like to thank everyone that has contributed to this strategy. We are committed to working in partnership, as a whole system, so that all our children and young people thrive.




Councillor Mick Brown
Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families
Birmingham City Council




Dr Sue Harrison
Director for Children & Families
Birmingham City Council

1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this strategy is to deliver a strong multi-agency approach to improving attendance across Birmingham schools and settings.

Attendance cannot be the responsibility of schools alone. As a local authority, we are setting out a three-year strategy which has been co-produced by key stakeholders, with the aim of improving attendance across our schools and settings. Our strategy sits firmly within the overarching principles of Birmingham Children and Young People's Partnership 'Change for Children and Young People 2023 - 2028' programme:

This strategy places children and young people at the heart of everything we do. The strategy ensures that:

- We are ambitious for every child and young person in Birmingham.
- We are one partnership with one set of priorities.
- We are relationship based and restorative in our approach.

The strategy ensures we align with the values to ensure all young people thrive in the city. We know young people thrive when they are:

We are THRIVING, because...



CONNECTED to meaningful opportunities and we are prepared for adulthood.



CONFIDENT to connect with help we can trust at the right time, right place.



INCLUDED and get the most we can from our home, school and community.



as **HEALTHY** as possible and nurtured throughout our life course.



SAFE at home, and in places and spaces outside of our families and schools.



HAPPY and RESPECTED Our voices and lived experience matter.

This strategy does not stand alone; it is closely aligned with a suite of other strategies currently being delivered across the city to improve outcomes for children. These include the Birmingham SEND Strategy and the Birmingham Inclusion Strategy. Notably, poor attendance is identified as a key contextual factor within the Inclusion Strategy, reinforcing the need for a coordinated and city-wide approach to improving school attendance. The strategy cited:

'Poor attendance and engagement within educational settings, means there is a lack of meaningful presence and participation... Reduced attendance/engagement can also limit access to many universal services that are typically accessed via schools.'



2. CONTEXT

2.1 NATIONAL CONTEXT

The Department for Education launched its attendance guidance, **Working Together to Improve School Attendance**, in May 2022, with the most recent update issued in August 2024, now forming part of statutory requirements for schools. The guidance has the central theme that ‘improving attendance is everyone’s business’.

‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’ pg. 8 states:

“Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore, at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools’ efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation; it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.”

The approach recommended in the guidance is to:

- Prevent patterns of absence from developing by promoting good attendance.
- Intervene early by using data to spot patterns of absence before they become persistent – working with families to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Target support for persistent and severe absentees with all local partners working together to re-engage pupils.

2.2 LOCAL CONTEXT

Published data for 2024 shows that Birmingham’s rates of overall absence (total available attendance %), persistent absence (below 90% attendance, and severe absence (below 50% attendance) exceed national averages across most pupil groups. Groups of children who are not attending school as much as their peers includes our primary-aged children, children in care, those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND), and children identified as in need or subject to child protection plans.

Absence rates for children known to a social worker are now more in line with those of our statistical neighbours. However, the proportion of these children who are persistently absent remains above the national average.

Persistent absence for secondary age children in Birmingham is in line with national average.



3. WHY DO WE NEED A COORDINATED STRATEGY FOR ATTENDANCE?

A coordinated attendance strategy is vital for Birmingham to tackle persistent absence, particularly among vulnerable groups, and to ensure every child has access to consistent, high-quality education. By aligning efforts across schools, social care, health services, and other partners, the strategy promotes early support and intervention, shared accountability, and more effective use of data. It also supports the city in meeting national expectations, such as Working Together to Improve School Attendance, whilst improving outcomes for children and young people through a unified, inclusive approach.

3.1 WHY IS REGULAR ATTENDANCE AT SCHOOL IMPORTANT?

Pupils from socio-economically disadvantaged backgrounds are nearly twice as likely to be persistently absent than their classmates (Education Endowment Foundation, 2024). A recent report published by the Children's Commissioner for England 'Missing Children, Missing Grades', shows a clear link between absence and attainment.

School attendance is a critical factor in both academic success and long-term life outcomes. Research published by the Department for Education in 2025 highlights that school attendance is a key driver of both academic success and long-term life outcomes across all year groups. Pupils with higher attendance are significantly more likely to meet expected standards at Key Stage 2 and achieve strong GCSE results at Key Stage 4. For instance, those with 95–100% attendance in Year 6 are 1.3 times more likely to meet expected standards in reading, writing, and maths, while similar attendance in Year 11 makes pupils 1.9 times more likely to achieve a Grade 5 in English and Maths. Even modest improvements—such as attending two additional weeks of school per year—can have a measurable impact.



The impact of absence extends beyond education: each additional day missed between Years 7–11 is associated with a reduction of approximately £750 annually in future earnings (based on 2024 prices), with persistent absence linked to lower employment stability and increased likelihood of long-term disadvantage. These findings highlight that attendance matters at every stage of a child's education, not just in exam years.

Good school attendance is linked to:

- **Reducing Disadvantage:** Absence does not impact children equally. Nationally, pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) continue to miss significantly more school than their peers. In the 2023/24 academic year, FSM pupils missed an average of 11.0% of sessions, compared to 5.8% for non-FSM pupils. This equates to approximately 21 days missed for FSM pupils versus 11 days for non-FSM pupils.
- **Preventing Risky Behaviours:** School is a significant protective factor for children. Evidence shows that disengagement from education increases vulnerability to risks such as gang involvement. Pupils involved in gang-related activity are twice as likely to be absent without authorisation, and 90% of young offenders have a history of persistent absence.
- **Supporting the Most Vulnerable:** School absence disproportionately affects children with complex needs and those receiving support from social care services. Pupils with child protection plans often face multiple barriers to regular attendance, including instability at home, emotional distress, and unmet educational needs. Attendance is a key contextual factor that, when combined with other challenges such as poverty, SEND, and mental health concerns, can significantly increase a child's vulnerability.

3.2 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY 'GOOD ATTENDANCE'?

Ideally children should attend school every day. Even attendance of 95% means that a child will have missed two weeks or 65 hours of lost learning time that will not be repeated. This would be satisfactory attendance rather than good attendance. 97% or above would be considered good attendance for most children.

However, for some children, attending regular hospital appointments will mean that 95% attendance is unattainable so 'good' attendance will be that they attend every day that they can. Similarly, children who require time off for reasons of religious observance may not be able to achieve the attendance levels of their peers, but this does not mean that their attendance cannot be good in that context. Schools should reflect this diversity in their attendance reward programmes to make sure that children are not disadvantaged or discouraged from attending school as much as they are able.

3.3 WHAT DO WE MEAN BY PERSISTENT AND SEVERE ABSENCE?

The definition of persistent absence is the percentage of children with 10% or more absence.

Severe absence is a relatively new category of absence and is defined as the percentage of children with 50% or more absence from school.

'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' makes it clear that children in this category should be supported to improve their attendance via a multi-disciplinary approach.

As part of this strategy, it is important to recognise that persistent absence is rarely caused by a single issue. Research from the Department for Education highlights that the underlying causes are broad, complex, and often rooted in family circumstances — requiring a whole-family and multi-agency response. Attendance must not be treated as a stand-alone issue; instead, it demands coordinated support across schools, services, and communities.

The main drivers of persistent absence include:

- Children and young people may face barriers related to mental and physical health, such as short-term illness, ongoing medical conditions, mental health challenges, and social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs.
- Academic challenges and disengagement can contribute to absence, including falling behind in learning, having low aspirations or confidence, and feeling that school is not relevant to future success.
- Social and behavioural issues, such as experiences of bullying, conflict with staff, or feelings of isolation, can lead to reluctance or refusal to attend school.
- The home environment may present barriers, including caring responsibilities, lack of transport, insecure housing, financial hardship, and inconsistent routines or boundaries.
- External pressures, such as involvement in crime, peer influence, or the need to earn income, can also drive non-attendance.
- Travel-related absences, including term-time holidays or extended visits to family overseas, continue to be a contributory factor.

Schools must be supported to understand and respond to these complex drivers with empathy, flexibility, and collaboration — ensuring that attendance strategies are inclusive and responsive to the lived experiences of children and their families.

3.4 WHAT CAUSES ABSENCE FROM SCHOOL?

3.4.1 Lack of parental support for attendance

A report based on research published by 'Public First' in September 2023 concluded that parental support for full time schooling had decreased. This had been driven by an increased willingness to take children on holiday during term time, the rise in mental health difficulties in children and young people, and the cost-of-living crisis.

The reports states that:

'Parents no longer believe it is their responsibility to ensure their children are in school every day: the idea that every day in school matters has been abandoned by mums and dads .Parents in the focus groups were clear that school closures during the pandemic had shifted this attitude in an unprecedented way.'

3.4.2 Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA)

As part of this strategy, it is essential that schools recognise and respond to Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), also referred to as Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA). These terms describe children and young people who face significant challenges in attending school due to emotional distress, often linked to anxiety. EBSA is commonly associated with both emotional and physical symptoms, such as panic, fatigue, or low mood, which result in reluctance or refusal to attend school. It is not a behavioural choice, but a response to overwhelming feelings that, if left unsupported, can lead to persistent absence. Schools must acknowledge EBSA as a legitimate barrier to attendance and consistently provide empathetic, tailored support. This includes working closely with families and professionals, creating emotionally safe environments, and ensuring that early intervention is part of their ongoing approach to improving attendance.

3.4.3 Children out of sight: the link to safeguarding

'Keeping Children Safe in Education (KCSIE 2025)' states that 'Children being absent from education for prolonged periods and/or on repeat occasions can act as a vital warning sign to a range of safeguarding issues including neglect, child sexual and child criminal exploitation - particularly county lines.' It identifies children who are persistently absent from education, including persistent absences for part of the school day, as in potential need of early help

support, and that school and college staff should be particularly alert to this vulnerable group.

Non-school attendance, and the significance of this as an indicator of neglect, should be considered by services working with potentially vulnerable children. The Birmingham Inclusion Strategy also points out that non-attendance at school can limit access to some fundamentals. This can include access to a hot meal and a warm space, when financial pressures make this difficult within their homes, which is particularly pertinent during the cost-of-living crisis.

Children involved in offending behaviours must be recognised as vulnerable too and resolving their unmet needs is critical to reducing risk. These children have often experienced abuse, exploitation and trauma and their offending behaviour and risk towards others should be seen in this context.

The multi-agency approach to severe absence outlined in 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance' and trauma informed practice, which should be at the forefront of every school's practice at this point, are essential to managing safeguarding risk effectively.

3.4.4 Attendance and disadvantaged pupils

The Education Endowment Foundation, alongside recent government and independent reports, continues to highlight a strong link between poverty and poor school attendance. In the 2024/25 academic year, 18.7% of all pupils were persistently absent, and 2.04% were severely absent. This issue disproportionately affects disadvantaged pupils: 33% of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) were persistently absent, compared to 13.4% of non-FSM pupils. Furthermore, FSM pupils were over three times more likely to be severely absent than their peers, with a severe absence rate of 3.56% versus 0.99% for non-FSM pupils. These figures underscore the urgent need for targeted interventions to address the attendance gap linked to socio-economic disadvantage.



4. METHODOLOGY

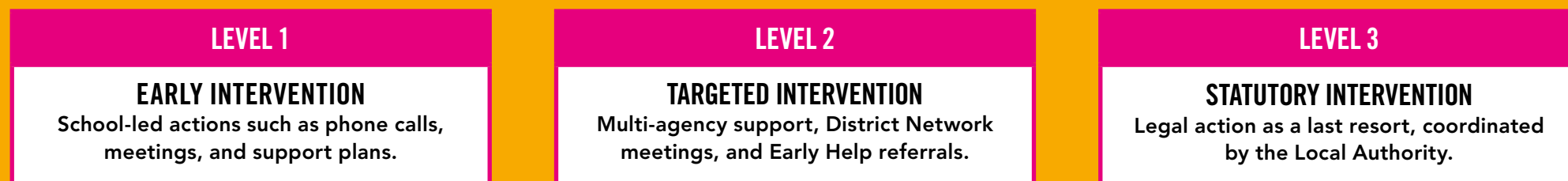
4.1 HOW WE ENSURED THAT THE STRATEGY IS FIT FOR PURPOSE

A wide range of partners from across the sector came together to co-produce this strategy, bringing in a variety of knowledge, expertise and experience. Co-production workshops brought stakeholders together, and separate online workshops were run for parents and schools. Surveys were sent to schools to capture children's voices. Birmingham Parent Carer Forum were instrumental in facilitating the voice of parents in contributing to the strategy and supported the planning of the workshops. The following partners contributed to the development of the strategy:



5. BIRMINGHAM'S APPROACH TO IMPROVING ATTENDANCE

Birmingham will adopt a graduated response framework to manage absence effectively.
This includes:



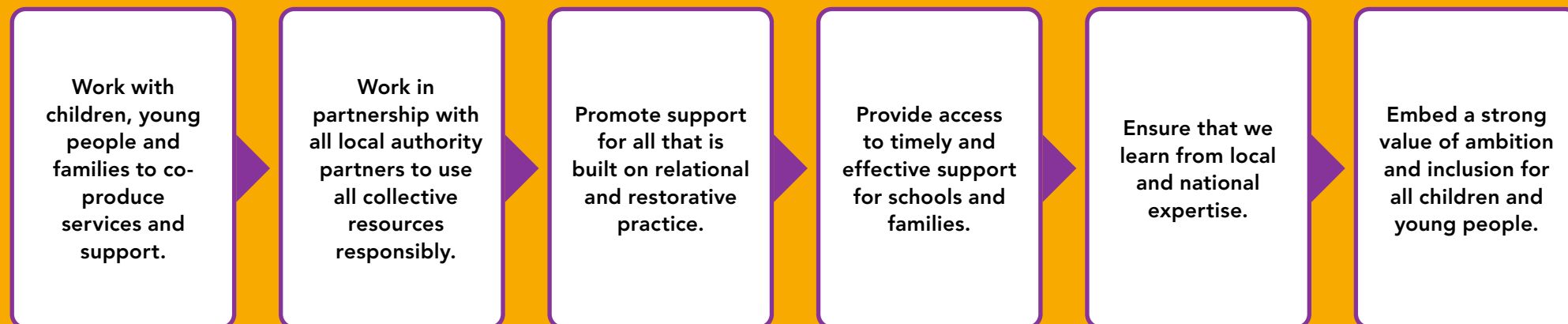
Opportunities for coaching, reflection, and sharing best practice will be embedded.

All professionals working with children will receive training in attendance responsibilities.

This includes governors, health professionals, and voluntary sector partners.

5.1 WORKING WITH PARTNERS AND STAKEHOLDERS ACROSS THE CITY

We know that we need to work with our partners to ensure the strategy is successful. Therefore, our approach to implementing the national attendance guidance in Birmingham is as follows:



5.2 PRIORITIES

Our 3-year strategy is built on 3 priorities which have been co-produced with key stakeholders across Birmingham. Each priority is broken down into specific aims and objectives to measure success. The priorities are:

**DEVELOPING
A RELATIONAL,
VALUES-LED APPROACH**

**BUILDING A
MULTI-AGENCY ATTENDANCE
SUPPORT OFFER**

**COMMUNICATING
ATTENDANCE AS
A HIGH PRIORITY**

CREATING A CULTURE WHERE EVERY CHILD BELONGS, ATTENDS, AND ACHIEVES



5.2.1 **Priority One:** Developing a relational, values-led approach to attendance

OUR AIM

Children, young people and their families shape the support at an individual, local and strategic level and are supported by relational practitioners who put children at the heart of their work.

Why is this a Birmingham priority?

All children have a right to attend school and to be supported to have good attendance. Families and communities were felt to be an underused asset within the system to support good attendance and should form part of an inclusive approach.

Good relationships and good communication are key to good attendance. Where schools use strength-based language and build positive relationships with children and families, parents and carers are more likely to respond positively to engagement with them in relation to improving attendance. When gathering stakeholder voice, parents and carers made it clear: "We need to be listened to and believed."

We know that penalty notices and threats of court action can have the opposite effect on engaging parents, leaving them feeling isolated and unsupported.

Where there is strong pastoral care in schools this is highly appreciated. Parents and carers appreciate having flexibility and an understanding of attachment needs is essential to ensure good attendance.

Effective transition support was identified as a key aspect leading to good attendance; when it goes well, it can really help children settle in and adjust. Transition points can be challenging for children and young people, and particularly children with SEND.

How will the Birmingham partnership achieve **Priority One**?

P1/01	Seek to understand the lived experience of families.
P1/02	Engage positively with parents/carers at a much earlier stage.
P1/03	Acknowledge families as assets within the community to help improve attendance.
P1/04	Have the voice of the child as the golden thread in all education and safeguarding plans.
P1/05	Promote and embed trauma-informed approaches including Trauma Informed Attachment Aware Schools (TIAAS) accreditation for schools.
P1/06	Review and update penalty notice and court thresholds, approaches and communication.
P1/07	Develop a support toolkit for schools, settings and parents /carers.
P1/08	Structure the Attendance Service to ensure compliance with 'Working Together to Improve School Attendance'.

How will we know we have made a difference?

- Positive feedback from parents, carers, and children on their experience of the delivery of this strategy.
- Schools engaging with the universal support services available to prevent fixed penalty notices.

- There is an increase in the take-up of Trauma-Informed training and accreditation by schools.
- Transition support audit indicates effective use of the Toolkit and attendance of a dip sample of children's records indicates a positive first term's attendance at their new setting (95%+).
- Integrated service reviews of children's records across Education, Health, Early Help and Social Care indicate effective target setting, support that responds to the voice of the child and family and monitoring of attendance in plans.

5.2.2 **Priority Two:** Building a multi-agency attendance support offer

OUR AIM

Children, young people and their families and schools receive the right support at the right time in the right place to achieve great school attendance.

Why is this a Birmingham priority?

We recognise that building a multi-agency attendance support offer is a key priority in improving outcomes for children and young people. Persistent absence is a complex issue that requires a coordinated response across education, health, social care, and community services. By working together, we ensure that families receive timely, targeted support that addresses the underlying barriers to regular school attendance. Our shared data and insights from local networks and Developing Local Provision (DLP) groups, highlight the urgent need to focus on our most vulnerable learners. Partners across the system acknowledge the importance of early identification, consistent messaging, and a joined-up approach to intervention. We also know that

increasing numbers of children are experiencing social, emotional, and mental health challenges that impact attendance, and that an Early Help approach—supported by training for all professionals—is essential to making this offer effective and sustainable.

How will the Birmingham partnership achieve **Priority Two?**

P2/01	Deliver a suite of training suitable for different audiences across the system that develops understanding and skill across the partnership in supporting good attendance practices: 1. Universal - For all frontline staff and parents and carers. 2. Enhanced - For staff whose role is more closely linked to attendance. 3. Specific - For those staff whose role specifically includes attendance.
P2/02	Deliver specific training to Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSLs) on their role in promoting the attendance of children and young people.
P2/03	Develop a support package to address severe persistent absence, and part-time timetables.
P2/04	Develop an attendance toolkit for schools and settings. This will include how to use the data tools available to drive effective interventions.
P2/05	Develop strong and effective guidance for schools, settings and families on emotionally based school avoidance/non-attendance.

P2/06

Establish termly attendance meetings with every school according to need, to support the development of strong and effective whole school practice.

P2/07

Work with the Developing Local Provision groups to deliver improved attendance for children with SEND and/or a social worker.

What key measures will we use to monitor our impact?

- The number of children on a part-time timetable will be reduced in line with local and national guidance.
- Attendance will be a specific feature in all Child in Need (CIN) and Child Protection (CP) plans where absence is below 95% and this will be monitored.
- Absence rates will fall in line with national, local and statistical neighbour rates for total absence, severe absence and persistent absence.
- The persistent absence rate of children eligible for free school meals will reduce to in line with the national average.
- The absence rate for children with an EHCP will reduce in line with the national average.
- Termly attendance meetings will be held for every school and demonstrate improved attendance.
- Schools will be using data tools to support interventions for children not attending school.

5.2.2 Priority Three: Communicating attendance as a high priority

OUR AIM

To make attendance everyone's business by giving school attendance the priority it needs in all partners' plans.

Why is this a Birmingham priority?

In Birmingham, communicating attendance as a high priority faces several challenges. There is currently no central monitoring of school attendance network meetings across the city. The support available from partners is not widely known among different stakeholders, limiting its impact. Schools do not yet set annual targets for reducing persistent and severe absence, nor do they have clear milestones for each academic year—targets that are essential to support their improvement journey. The Local Authority plays a key role in helping schools reach these goals, but system-wide approaches to improving attendance are not yet well embedded. Voluntary and community organisations remain an underused resource, despite their potential to contribute meaningfully. Through our stakeholder voice exercise, we identified that partners are keen to collaborate in our drive to improve attendance. They agree that positive communication, including around attendance, is motivating and encouraging, and should be central to a whole-system approach.

How will the Birmingham partnership achieve [Priority Three](#)?

P3/01	Develop an annual attendance campaign that changes each year and responds to live trends.
P3/02	Update the council attendance pages to provide clear advice and guidance for each stakeholder.
P3/03	Ensure that development/strategic plans across the partnership include actions around improving school attendance.
P3/04	Establish an annual Birmingham attendance conference to share good practice.
P3/05	Set up and facilitate localised attendance forums for schools and linked professionals.
P3/06	Set up and facilitate a termly Attendance Board for all partners to develop and review the attendance action plan, trends and impact.
P3/07	Regularly include attendance updates in education bulletins and communications to other partners.
P3/08	Develop and share an attendance dashboard sourced by live attendance data.
P3/09	Support schools through TSM's to set clear attendance targets supported by school attendance strategies and action plans.

What key measures will we use to monitor our impact?

- Birmingham's Attendance Strategy, and everyone's responsibilities within it, will be understood by Birmingham City Council colleagues, schools, and other partners.
- Accurate live attendance data will be shared with partners and used to identify ongoing priorities and impact of actions.
- Feedback from stakeholders will be gathered at least twice a year to ensure that communication methods remain fit for purpose.
- 95%+ satisfaction rate will be achieved at each attendance conference.
- At least 2 case studies will be provided each academic year demonstrating good practice happening across the city.
- Birmingham Education Board will monitor the delivery and impact of the Attendance Strategy.



6. MONITORING & OVERSIGHT

6.1 STRATEGIC ROLE OF DATA

Improving attendance is a Birmingham Children's Partnership key commitment. Birmingham City Council will contribute to the delivery of the strategy through the use of attendance data to: coordinate targeted interventions, meet the council's statutory responsibilities, and support schools and families effectively. Annual attendance targets will be set, with progress monitored on a termly basis. Data will also inform resource allocation and enable collaborative multi-agency work. To promote transparency and share best practice, the Council will publish regular attendance reports and case studies.

MONITORING	TARGETED SUPPORT	ACCOUNTABILITY	PARTNERSHIP	CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT	MAINTAIN
Collect and analyse school attendance data, including persistent and severe absence, and key groups. Benchmark against national and local figures to identify priorities.	Identify schools and cohorts with high absence rates and direct resources and interventions where needed.	Ensure schools comply with statutory guidance and implement appropriate responses using data.	Share data with partners to enable coordinated support and inform multi-agency meetings.	Track intervention impact, refining approaches based on trends and feedback, and update strategy as needed.	A live attendance dashboard, report progress to oversight boards, and share best practice.

7. ACCOUNTABILITY & GOVERNANCE

An Action Plan will be developed by January 2026 and be regularly updated annually to address the priorities identified within the Strategy. This plan will be monitored by a newly established Attendance Board, which will include representatives from across Children's Services and partner organisations.

Progress reports at the end of every academic year will be submitted to the Birmingham Education Board, as well as Children's Services Directors' Assurance Meetings. The Annual report will be discussed at the council's Education Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Attendance data will also be reported to the Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Partnership as part of the Children Out of Sight Working Group, chaired by Health colleagues.

Partner organisations will follow their internal governance arrangements to ensure the Attendance Strategy delivery and impact is effectively monitored.

Birmingham City Council will achieve full compliance with Working Together to Improve School Attendance through the delivery of this strategy.

For further information, please contact: attendance@birmingham.gov.uk



8. APPENDIX

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

EBSA: Emotionally Based School Avoidance – when a child or young person experiences challenges in attending school due to emotional distress.

EBSNA: Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance.

Multi-disciplinary: An approach involving professionals from different sectors (education, health, social care) working together.

Persistent absence: Defined as a pupil missing 10% or more of their possible sessions.

Severe absence: Defined as a pupil missing 50% or more of their possible sessions.

Good attendance: Typically, 97% or above. 95% is considered satisfactory. Attendance is measured in sessions (two per day) and equates to hours lost (6.5 hours per day).