

Inclusion and Educational Engagement Attendance Hubs – Autumn Term 2026

Agenda - Primary

- **Inclusion Support Service Updates incl data**
- **Ofsted readiness around attendance (HIAS)**
- **Feedback from Triad**
- **Behaviour and Attendance incl activity**
- **Public Health Nursing**
- **HEP video**
- **SAST**

DfE updates

The back-to-school reset guide

▣ The start of the school year can bring mixed emotions for children and parents. Dr Martha Deiros Collado, a psychologist with over 20 years' experience who specialises in family support, shares her tips to help parents prepare for their child's return to school.

These tips are designed to help you support your child's return to school in a way that feels manageable for your family, whether you try one, a few, or all of them.

▣ Build excitement together

As you prepare for your child going back to school, help them find things to look forward to. Chat about seeing friends, a favourite lesson, or a more grown-up as they move into a new year. If they're starting a new school, look at photos of the school together and talk about what will be familiar and what will be different. This can make the unknown feel less daunting and a little more exciting.

▣ Focus on facts rather than predictions

When you talk about school, stick to facts, such as what time school starts, what the first day will look like, instead of guessing how your child will feel. Listen first before you rush to reassure them or solve problems. Often, children simply need you to listen. An open conversation can help them understand what they need and how best to support them.

▣ Build independence through simple choices

School is a space for children to build their confidence and grow. Try to give them small choices about their school kit for the new term, such as picking out something new if that works for your family, or it could be which bag or shoes to wear from what you already have or deciding what to bring to school. Even small choices like these give children a sense of control and help them feel more excited about returning to school, while also building confidence and independence.

▣ Make the new routine feel familiar

Whether starting a new school, a new morning routine, or taking a different route to school, try to make time to practise your routine before term begins. Familiarity can help school feel less daunting. Try travelling the route they'll use on school days, whether that's walking, taking the bus, getting a lift, or a combination. Even talking through the journey together, or looking at pictures of the school or route beforehand, can help build familiarity if a full practice run isn't possible. This is also a good opportunity to talk to your child about the school drop off and pick-up. Clearly explain what their routine will look like, who'll be picking them up, or if they'll be attending after-school clubs. Many families' day-to-day looks different: writing this up in a clear and simple visual timetable can help children become familiar with their weekly routine. This allows children to understand what will soon become their new normal away from the pressure of the school run and the early mornings.

▣ Making goodbyes easier

It's completely normal for some children to find goodbyes difficult, especially after spending more time together over the holidays. Help your child know what to expect by keeping your goodbye warm, predictable and brief. Having a consistent routine, such as a special hug, handshake or phrase, makes goodbyes feel more familiar and helps your child feel more secure.

If they're upset, let them know you understand how they're feeling, while calmly reassuring them that you'll see them again at the end of the school day.

▣ Address anxieties ahead of time

Children might have specific worries about returning to school – such as what they're going to eat, using the bathroom, friendship groups or their new teachers. By acknowledging their feelings while showing your confidence that they can cope, you help them feel more safe and secure about the change.

Remember, the goal isn't to have the perfect response, but to help your child feel listened to. Here are a few simple swaps that can help make those conversations feel more open and supportive.

Instead of

Your teacher is really nice and you'll make loads of friends!

Try

You're moving up to year 3. Can you remember your teacher's name? Was it Miss Clare...? Who is in your class this year? Can you remember what you are going to be doing that's different to last year?

Instead of

Don't worry about school dinners – there will be lots to choose from!

Try

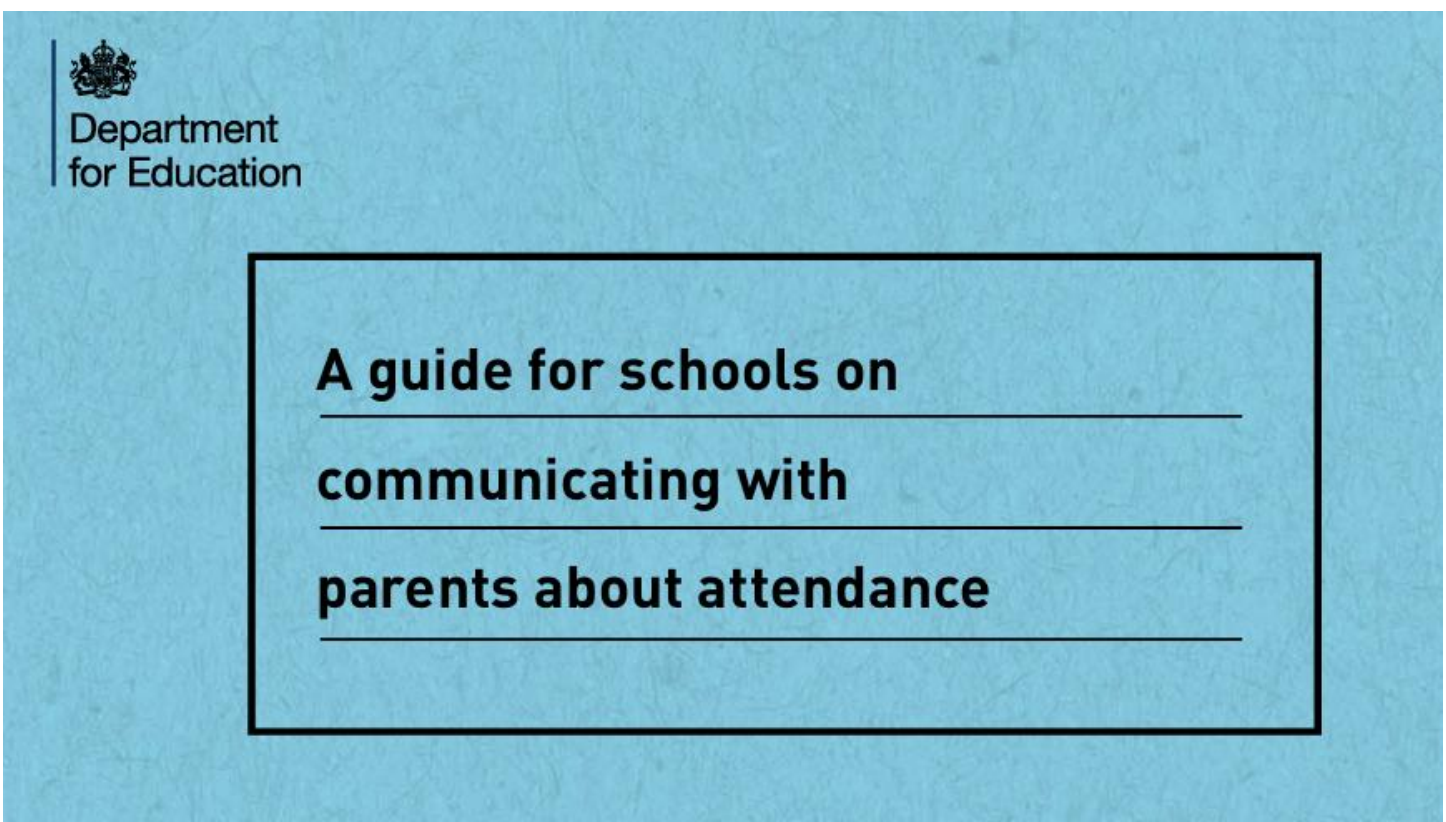
You'll be having school dinners. We can look at the menu together and choose foods you think you might like to try.

Instead of

Don't be sad – you'll be fine!

Try

I can see this feels hard right now. It's ok to feel sad when we say goodbye. I'll be thinking about you today, and I'll be back to pick you up after school.





Department
for Education

A guide for schools on

communicating with

parents about attendance

Communications calendar

Autumn term and Christmas holidays

Moment	Mindset	Messaging for parents
Start of the new school year in September National data shows that pupils who miss school early are much more likely to struggle with attendance later. Analysis of attendance data show that of pupils who had at least one day of absence in the first week of the 2024/25 academic year, over half (57.4%) went on to be persistently absent.	Public First focus groups with parents across England found that daily attendance is no longer seen as automatic, and parents increasingly weigh tiredness, wellbeing and convenience when deciding whether to send a child to school. Parents are trying to enforce routines after the long summer break. Some will be thankful that they're back in school full-time, some will be facing resistance to go from their children. Barriers: It's sometimes easier to just keep them off school when they don't want to go rather than them getting upset. Motivations: Now is the time to start good habits and a positive routine for the rest of the year.	Remind parents that now is the time to set good intentions for the year ahead and highlight the positives of returning to school, like seeing friends, their favourite lessons and enjoyable routines like after-school activities. Outline what parents need to know for the year, including your term dates and attendance policy. <i>We can't wait to welcome all children/pupils back to school on XX. We know that returning to school means a shift in routines. Prepare for a strong start to the school year by resetting sleep schedules 3 to 5 days before school begins by moving bedtime and wake-up time earlier in small steps.</i> <i>Reintroduce familiar routines such as reading before bed, preparing clothes, or having breakfast at the table. Limit screens for at least an hour before bed to support sleep as overstimulation can affect sleep quality, and plan a calm, structured first morning back to help them feel more confident.</i>
Winter illness period In the UK, this typically runs from October to March, with cases of flu, COVID-19 and respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) peaking between December and February.	DfE data shows that illness is the single biggest reason for school absence in England, accounting for just over half of all absences between the start of December and end of February. Barriers: Some parents might not be aware of the NHS advice on when they can send their child in to school with mild symptoms or worry their children to be seen as a risk to others if they do go to school with a cold. Some parents who have jobs requiring them to go to their place of work will struggle when their children are sick and need to be kept off school. But those who work from home or don't work may be more lenient when their children are unwell, as keeping them off isn't as much of an issue.	Remind parents of the NHS guidance that states children can attend school with common cold symptoms like a sore throat, runny nose or cough unless they have a high temperature. <i>If you're not sure if your child is well enough to go come to school, check the NHS guidance for common illnesses at and let us know as soon as possible if they need to stay home.</i> <i>Remember, ahead of and during the winter illness period, all eligible school-aged children are offered an NHS flu vaccine. We'll be in touch with more information about this.</i>

Spring term and Easter

Moment		
Start of the new term in January We know that comms can have limited impact when it comes to stopping term-time holidays, but that doesn't mean reminders about expectations for attending school every day aren't important.	The 'fresh-whereby p' 'temporal l New Year's Some pare thinking ab booking tin offer discoi package h Barriers: T feels far of child out of Motivation: synonymol and open to cnanging behaviour. This provides an opportunity to reinforce good attendance habits.	overwhelm, etc.
National secondary school	DfE data shows that attendance patterns established in	Secondary schools will be communicating with parents

you need support, speak to us. We're here to help.

Hampshire versus National Attendance up to 16th July 2026

(DfE View Your Education Data)

		2025/26		
		Hampshire	England	Difference
Total	Overall Absence %	6.2%	6.7%	-0.5%
	Persistent Absence %	14.5%	18.1%	-3.5%
Primary	Overall Absence %	4.5%	5.1%	-0.6%
	Persistent Absence %	9.4%	13.2%	-3.7%
Secondary	Overall Absence %	8.1%	8.4%	-0.3%
	Persistent Absence %	20.6%	22.9%	-2.3%
Special	Overall Absence %	12.5%	13.0%	-0.5%
	Persistent Absence %	30.9%	34.8%	-3.9%

Overall attendance remains strong across Hampshire at 93.8%, continuing to outperform the national average of 93.3% (+0.5%).

Primary attendance is a key strength, with Hampshire at 95.5%, 0.6% above national levels and an increase of 0.2% on 2024/25, reflecting effective early intervention and school practice.

Secondary attendance stands at 91.9%, tracking above the national figure of 91.6% and an improvement of 0.1% from 2024/25, despite post pandemic and mental health challenges.

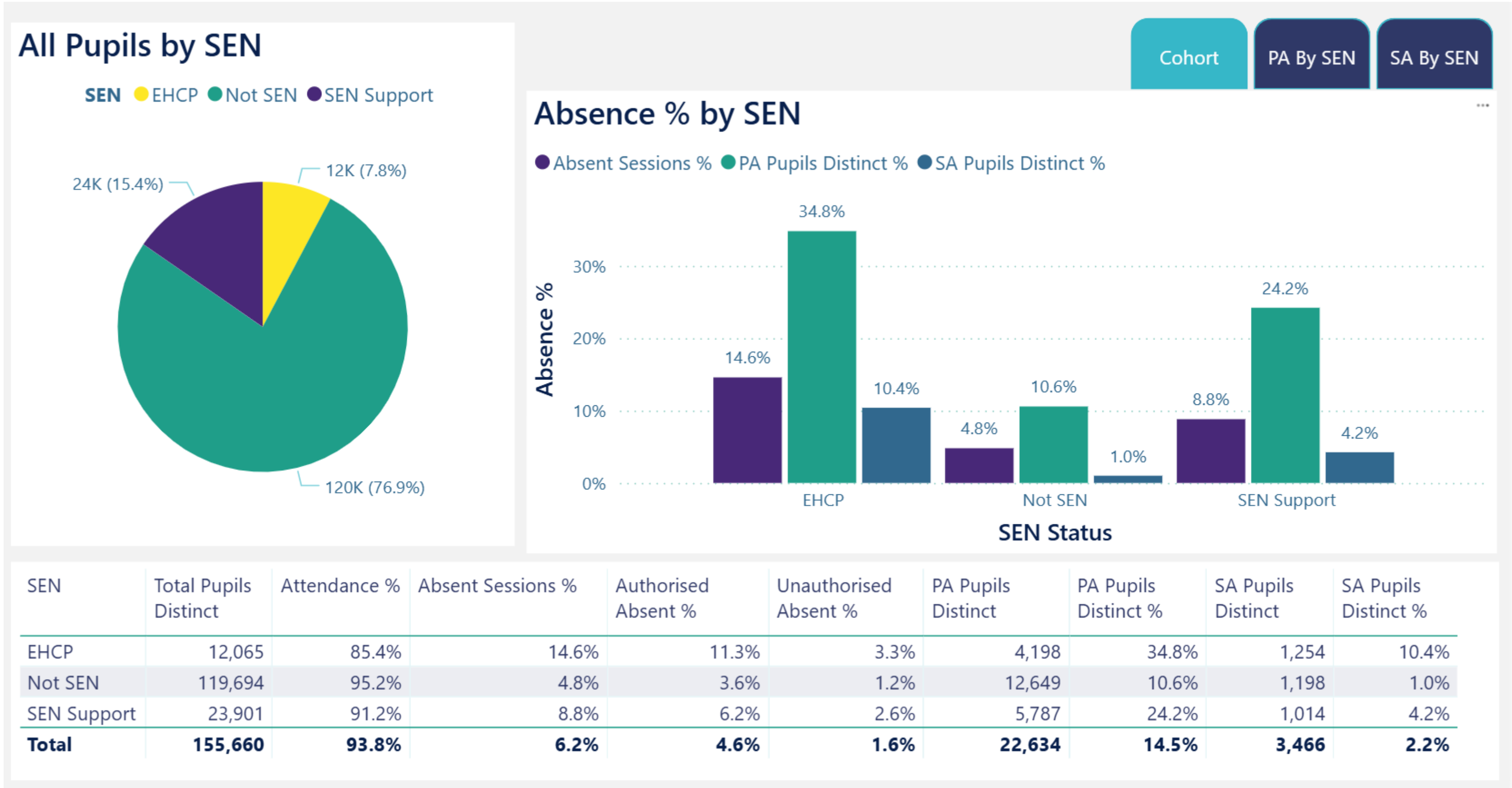
Special school attendance is 87.5%, again slightly above national (87.0%), highlighting strong support in complex settings.

Persistent Absence remains a challenge in Hampshire (14.5%). However, all phases are considerably below national (18.1%), showing targeted support to stop entrenched absence is having impact.

Overall, the data shows positive system-wide performance, while reinforcing the need for continued targeted, relational and multi-agency support for pupils with the most complex barriers to attendance.

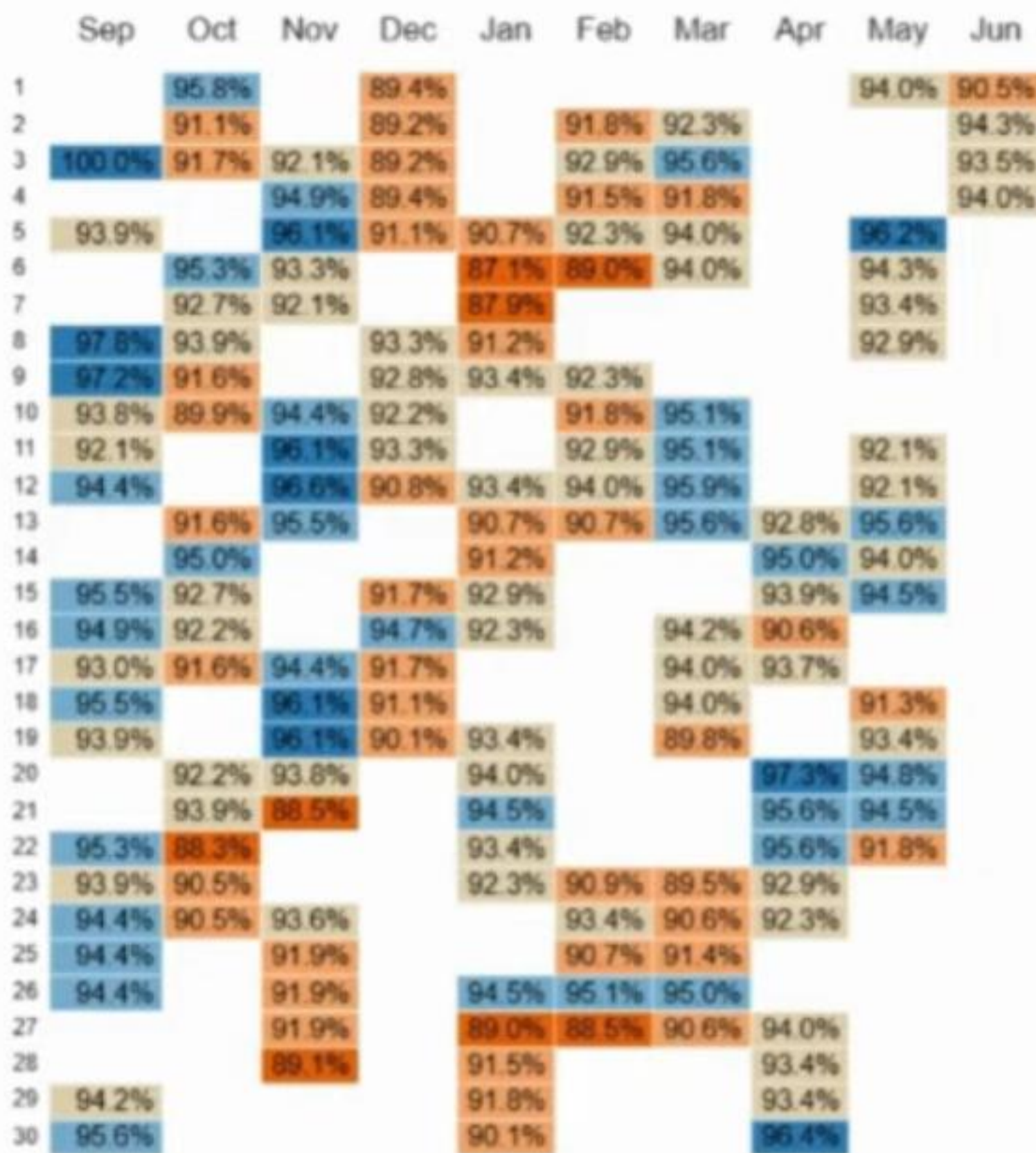
Attendance Data by SEN Status

(DfE View Your Education Data 16 July 20206)



- Absence for children with an EHCP and SEN Support has reduced since 2024/25
- EHCP current absence 14.6% (14.7 2024/25)
- SEN Support current absence 8.8% (9.1% 2024/25)
- Persistent absence (PA) for these groups has also improved
- EHCP PA is currently is 34.8% (35.8 2024/25)
- SEN Support PA is 24.2% (25.3% 2024/25)

VYED – Explore your attendance patterns



- As we can see, the hard work and success is reflected in the attendance data, so where can further opportunities for improvement be found? Where to focus our effort for maximum impact? This is where attendance patterns comes in.

- Easy to read heatmap that enables you as school leaders to read the attendance variation where it is strongest or weakest:

Your school's range



Calculate colours separately for each academic year. This means the same attendance percentage can appear as a different colour in different years.

- Current & previous academic year
- School week and month
- Filter dates (inset days) “Date Filter”
- Filter different cohorts (FSM, NCY (will be correct on current & previous AY), PA etc)
- “Current Academic Year view” will become available after October half-term. Last academic year is available.

Monitor your school attendance

Hide

View school attendance data

- [View school attendance data](#)
View attendance data and insights for your school, pupil groups and individual pupils.
- [Absence bandings user guide on GOV.UK \(opens in new tab\)](#)
Find out how the absence bandings report works, what the data shows you and how to use it to target your resources across your school, academy trust or local authority.
- [Your attendance summary reports](#)
Download a Word document report of your school's attendance. New reports are added termly and half-termly.
- [Explore your attendance patterns](#)
Find attendance patterns across your school year and track how they change over time.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c89oKvBHvdc&t=184s>

Focus effort where it will have the greatest impact and give you insight around the attendance data

VYED – Similar School reports & ABIE changes for September

Based on your feedback, we've adapted our Similar Schools model to include more of what you say matters

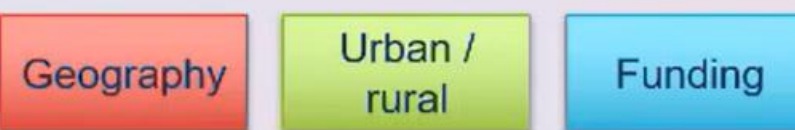
- 1 We determined the factors that explain most variation between schools

AI - Machine Learning Model identified:

Variation driven by the **composition of pupils:**



Variation driven by differences **between schools:**



Triangulated with:



- 2 Then supplemented that with what you tell us also matters

You said, we did...

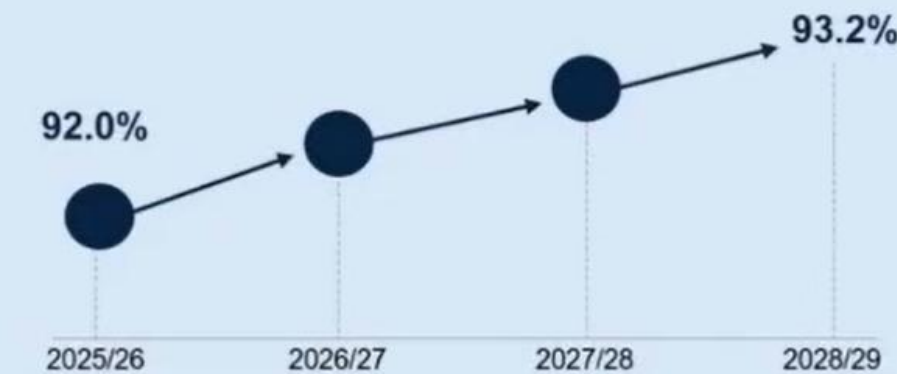
- ✓ The selective status of a school
- ✓ The proportion of students from Gypsy, Roma or Traveller ethnic groups
- ✓ Size of school
- ✓ Distance travelled to the school
- ✓ The age groups of the comparator schools

What we didn't do:



In designing three-year ABIEs we were guided by four key principles:

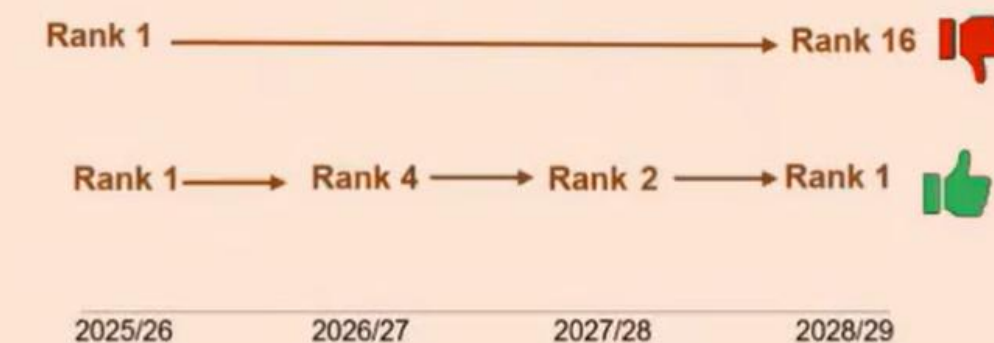
Recognise sustained improvement, not just a single year's performance



Avoid advantaging or disadvantaging schools simply because of their starting point



Ensure no ceiling to ambition for those leading the way



Keep ABIEs fair and achievable for all schools



"More schools that will look and feel more similar to you"

Ofsted Attendance

Inspection in HCC 2025/26

80 inspections under the revised framework in 2025/26 in HCC – all schools.

Attendance and Behaviour Judgement Area					
	Urgent Improvement	Needs Attention	Expected	Strong	Exceptional
HCC	0%	11%	58%	31%	0%
National*	1%	14%	54%	30%	1%

National* – (10th November to 31st July - Ofsted Management Information State Funded Schools)

Inspection in HCC

19 schools (24%) have a 'next step' linked to attendance.

Some schools have an attendance 'next step' whilst being judged to be at the 'expected standard'

Examples:

- Leaders should implement their attendance strategy fully, so that it results in pupils' high attendance, particularly for disadvantaged pupils and pupils with special educational needs and/or disabilities.
- Leaders must continue to identify and tackle barriers to pupils' high attendance. They need to secure rapid improvement for a small number of pupils, including disadvantaged pupils.
- Leaders should ensure that their work on pupils' attendance has greater impact and leads to improved attendance and declining persistent absence.

Attendance – key messages from Ofsted

Attendance is not viewed in isolation. Inspectors are interested in how effectively leaders understand, remove and respond to barriers to attendance.

Expectation:

- High expectations for attendance for every pupil.
- Strong attendance culture across the whole school.
- Early identification of emerging absence patterns.
- Understanding the *why* behind absence, not just reporting the data.
- Attendance is considered alongside safeguarding, inclusion and pupil wellbeing.
- Leaders able to demonstrate the impact of actions and interventions.
- Particular attention given to vulnerable groups, including SEND and disadvantaged pupils.

What schools should be ready to talk about

Schools should be able to explain not only *who* is absent, but *why* they are absent and *what difference* their actions are making

Inspectors are likely to explore:

- How leaders identify attendance concerns early.
- How barriers are understood through direct engagement with families.
- How support is tailored to individual circumstances.
- How attendance strategies are monitored and evaluated.
- How attendance is discussed by governors and trustees.
- The effectiveness of transition arrangements
- The experiences of persistently and severely absent pupils.

Takeaways

Attendance is increasingly viewed as an indicator of inclusion, belonging and safeguarding, not simply a performance measure.

- Can you identify key attendance concerns swiftly - do you know the headline numbers/how this has changed over time and how it differs by pupil groups?
- Can you explain the barriers affecting you PA /SA pupils... and strategies being used to address these?
- Can you show how support is matched to need and - how does it differ for families/pupil group etc? Are you relentless?
- Can you evidence impact rather than activity?
- Can pupils and parents describe a culture of belonging and support?

Framework updates from September 2026

[What you need to know about the September 2026 updates to education inspections – Ofsted: education](#)

New operating guidance and toolkit can be found here - [School inspection: toolkit, operating guides and information - GOV.UK](#)

Summary of changes are here : [Summary of changes - GOV.UK](#)



Triad Project

February 2026 to date

Winchester and Eastleigh schools:

Twyford St Mary CofE Primary, Compton All Saints CofE Primary, Owlesbury Primary, Colden Common Primary, Denmead Junior, Hambledon Primary, Nightingale Primary, Cherbourg Primary, Norwood Primary, Freegrounds Junior, Netley Abbey Junior, Kings Copse Primary

Schools completed a self-assessment

Attendance toolkit for schools

To support schools to identify the drivers of absence and adopt effective practice to improve attendance

https://hias-moodle.mylearningapp.com/pluginfile.php/5122/mod_resource/content/1/Attendance%20toolkit%20for%20schools.pdf

Annex B: Self-assessment

This self-assessment is an informal and optional resource designed to support you to review your current attendance practice and identify any areas of practice that can be strengthened.

For a more in-depth review of your attendance practice, you may also wish to:

- discuss attendance with your leadership team, including attendance and pastoral leaders and partners (where applicable)
- consider this alongside analysis of your attendance data and wider development plans

What you need to do

For each question, give a score between 1 and 4 that reflects the strength of your current practice, using the key below:

1. in place or in the early stages of development
2. in place but needs to be strengthened and further embedded
3. in place but effectiveness has not been tested
4. in place and known to be effective

Add notes explaining your score for each question in the 'evidence' column, along with details of your attendance systems, processes, engagement and communications and any supporting data.

When you have completed the assessment, use the results to help you refer to the relevant section of the toolkit. This will give you information to help improve practice.

You can record any agreed next steps or actions in the final column.

Please see the following page for the self-assessment table.

What outcomes are you hoping for from this project?

- Better communications with parents, including what school can offer to support
- Further strategies to improve attendance
- Improve attendance for persistent absentees and targeted groups
- Sharper systems with clear, consistent messaging



Barriers

- Behaviour (and linked to this parent anxiety)
- Sibling attendance
- Holidays
- Impact on % in a small school



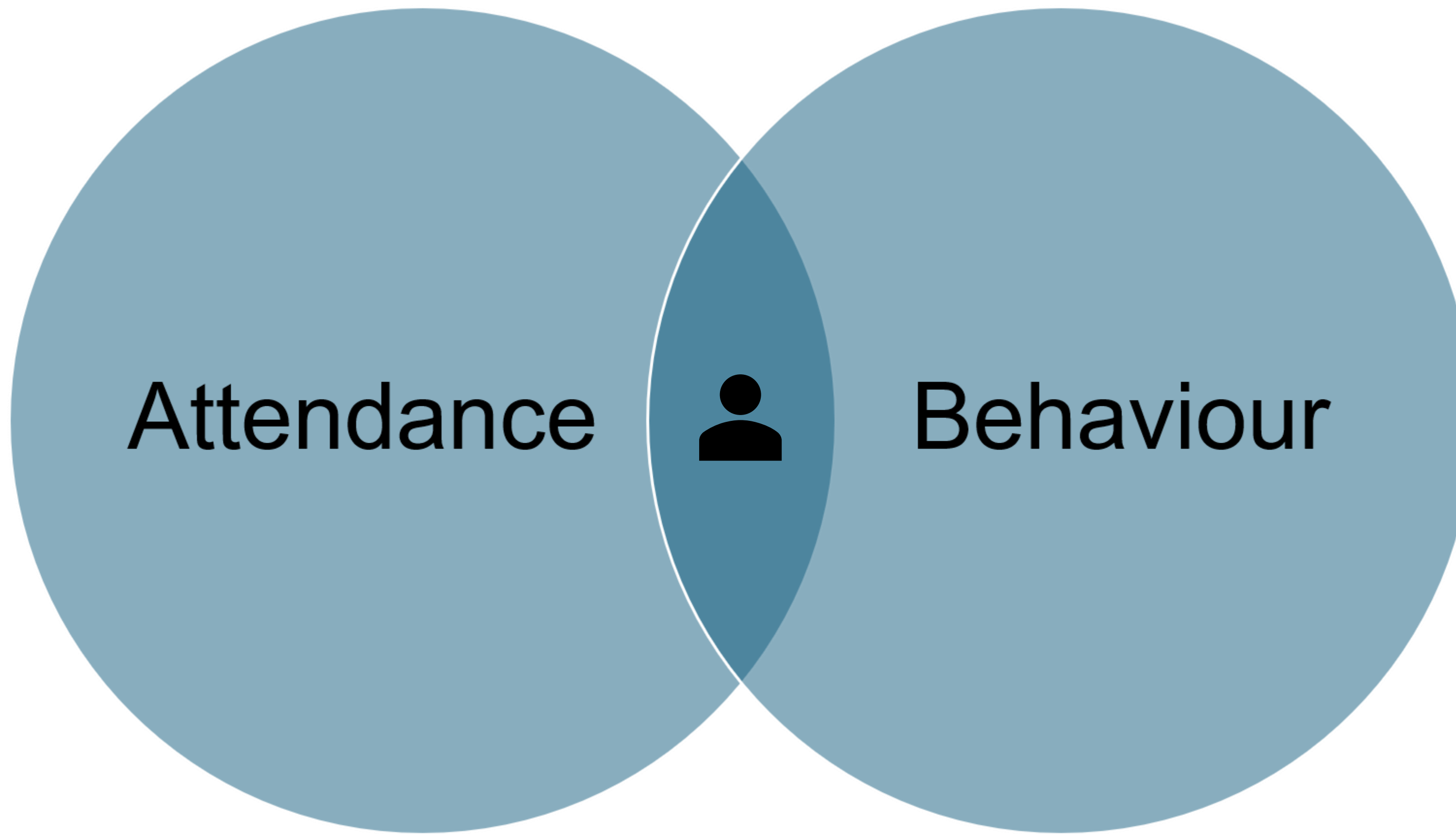
Strategies Triad schools have implemented

- Relational approach – phone calls not letters, with targeted interventions.
- Using attendance data to spot patterns when phoning home and anticipate PA (those absent in first 10 days of a term) including ‘days to next banding’.
- Reframing communication so that it clearly articulates the impact of absence—particularly focusing on what children miss in terms of learning, relationships, and wider opportunities.
- Strong tracking and flagging systems including of improved attendance. Also ensuring positive communication around attendance.
- Half-termly attendance raffle for pupils achieving 96% or above. Pupils with 100% attendance have their names entered twice, giving them an additional chance to win. This approach allows children to see improvement in a relatively short timeframe and be included in the reward in the next half term, impact seen through number of children qualifying for a raffle ticket.
- EBSA approach with soft starts - play equipment and forest area used to support regulation and readiness to learn.
- Aligning INSET days: Coordinating training days with neighbouring schools has reduced issues for families with siblings in different settings.
- Increased collaboration and sharing of practice between schools and other agencies.
- Recognition that external system barriers can still limit schools’ ability to fully address absence.

When attendance and behaviour collide

Which of these is your biggest red flag?

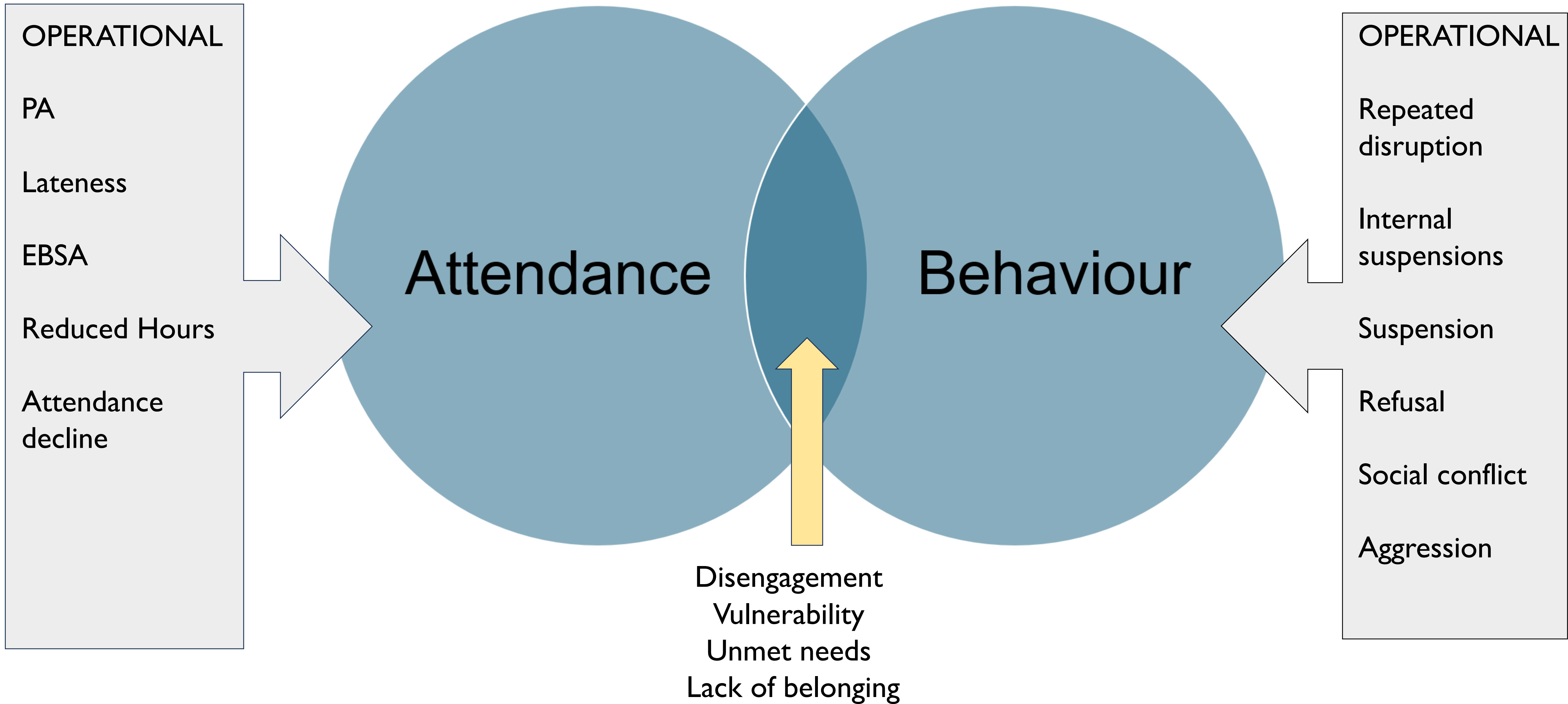
- Attendance drops below 90%
- Three internal exclusions
- Regular Friday absence



Who are your primary attendance concerns?

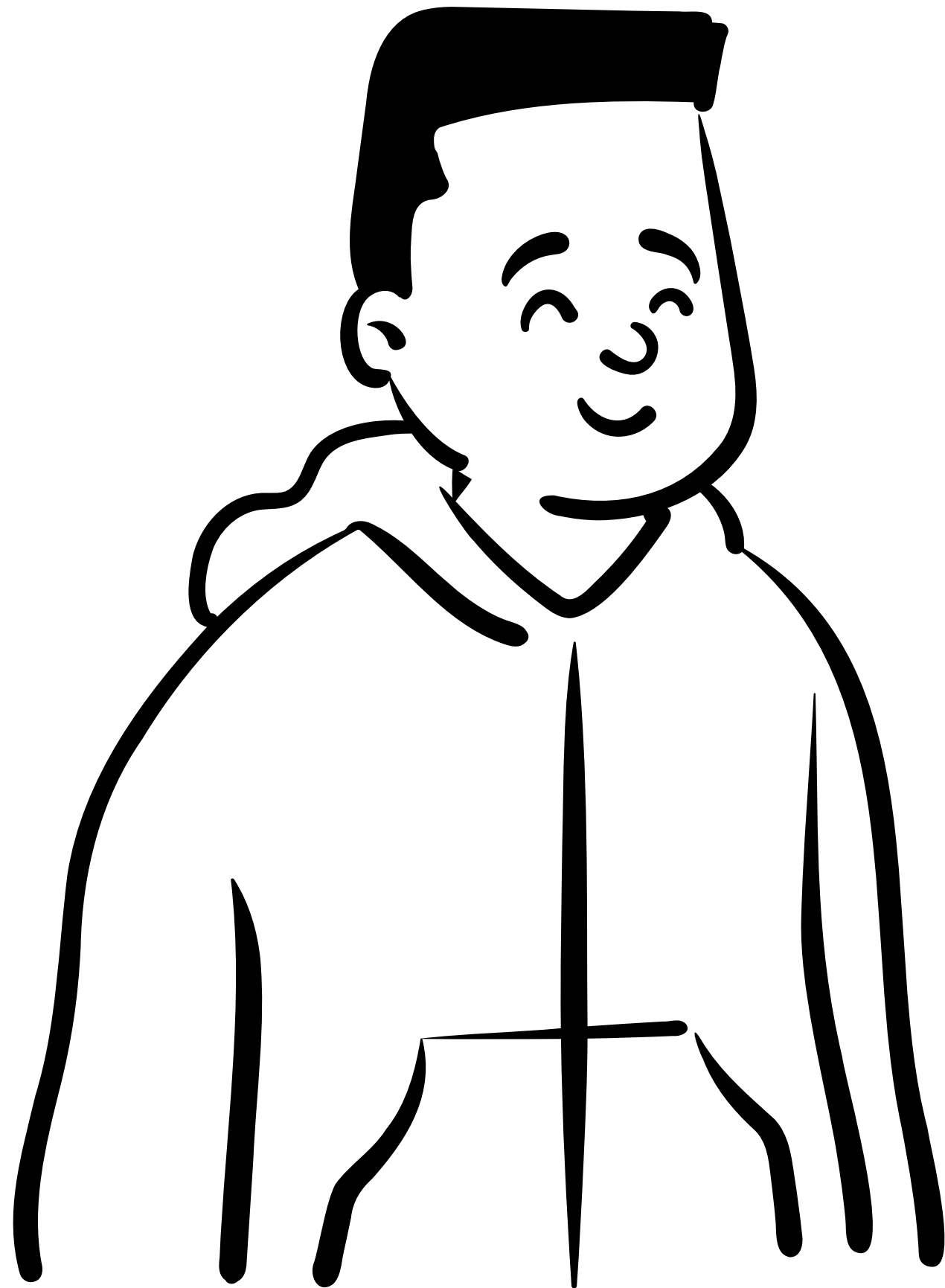
Who are your primary behaviour concerns?

**TASK: Who are your overlap children?
How many children come to mind?**



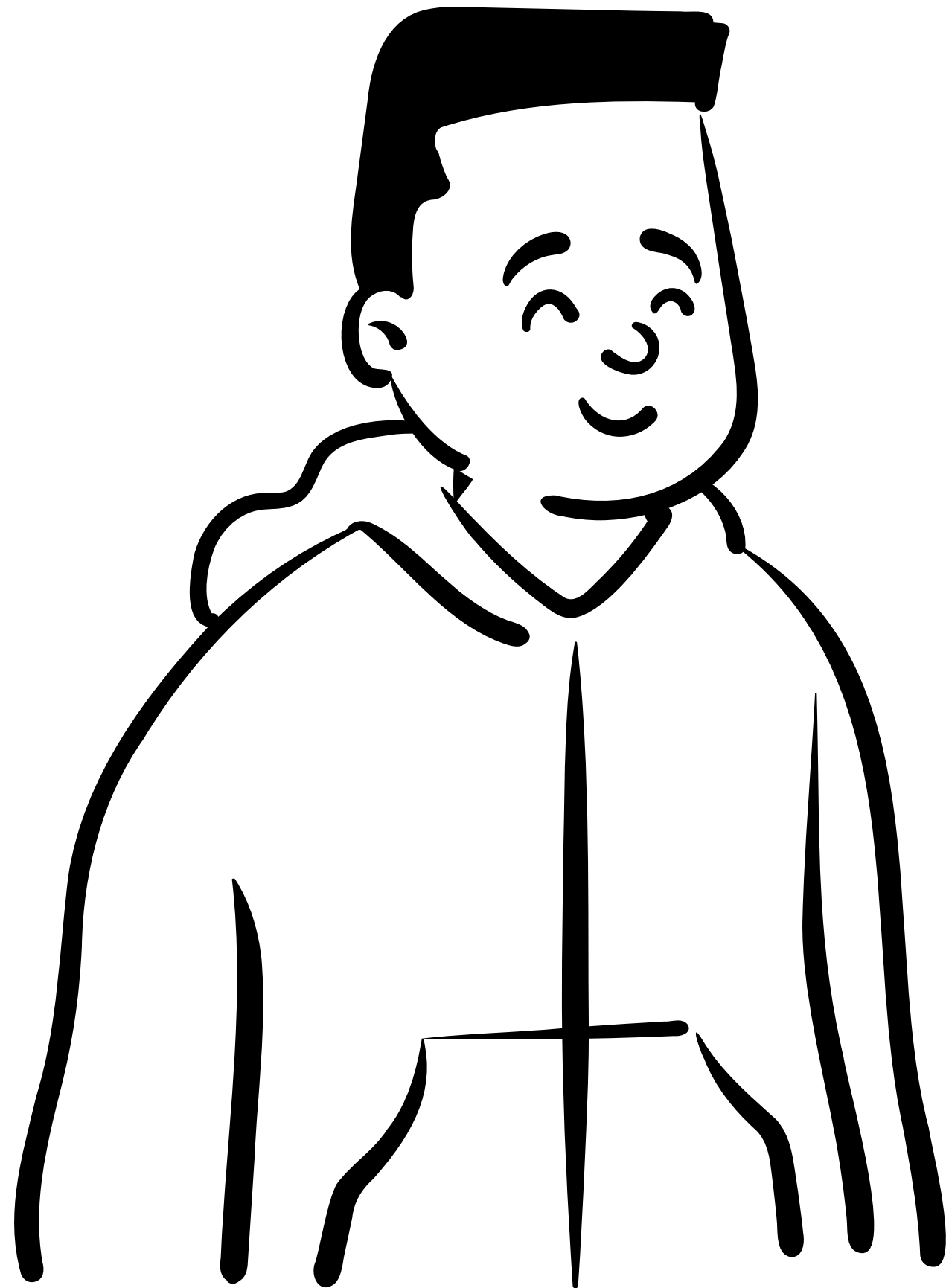
The overlap is where attendance and behaviour stop being separate issues and become a strategic priority together.

Henry – Yr 8

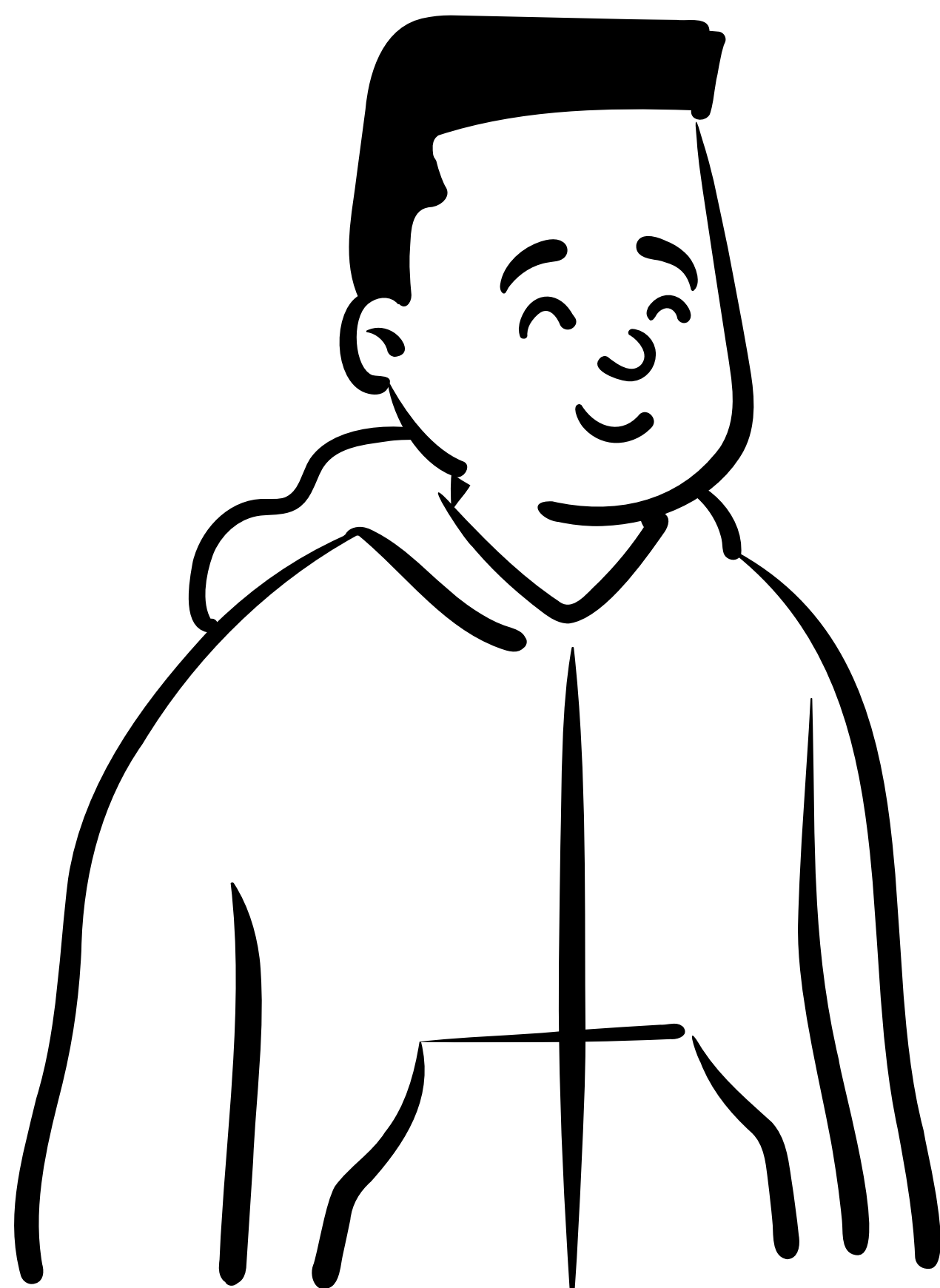


- Attendance at 84%
- Persistent lateness
- 6 behaviour incidents in the first half term
- Refusing some lesson
- 2 suspensions in the last academic year.
- **DISCUSS: What would you first actions be?**

Which came first – the attendance or behaviour concern?



- Probably neither -
- The poor attendance and poor behavior are likely symptoms of something else.
- **Symptoms:** poor attendance, refusal, disruption, suspension...
- **Possible causes:** Anxiety, SEND, family circs, friendship issues, lack of belonging...
- We spend a lot of time thinking about interventions but perhaps less time thinking about diagnosis of the problem.



- Do you ask what is **wrong** with this child or what is **happening** for this child?
- When attendance is falling and behaviour is escalating, do our systems become more punitive at exactly the point more support/different support is needed?

The overlap

- Across Hampshire, we looked at all Year 5 and Year 6 children who had been suspended in the 2025/2026 academic year. **44% of children were either persistent or severely absent.**
- Have you looked at your attendance and behaviour data **together?** (Do attendance and behaviour sit in separate teams?)
- If the same children appear in datasets, are your attendance and behaviour responses connected enough?
- **If we look at these data sets separately, what might get missed?**
- Improving attendance and behaviour is rarely about attendance and behaviour. It is about strengthening engagement, belonging and connection.

Over the next few weeks...

Ask your attendance lead **and** behaviour lead to **meet** and look at:

- Pupils appearing on both lists
- Emerging patterns
- One pupil who need a different response, rather than more of the same. Could you complete a case study on this child? What are the different actions that will be taken? Who will track and monitor?

BREAK



Public Health Nursing 5-19

Supporting Attendance,
Wellbeing and
Educational outcomes



Specialist Community Public Health Nurse.

14 September 2026

What we do as a 5-19 Public Health Nurse service

The Specialist Community Public Health Nursing service are a multidisciplinary team which:

- Lead delivery of the Healthy Child Programme (5-19)
- Improve health and wellbeing outcomes
- Reduce health inequalities
- Safeguard vulnerable children and young people
- Promote healthy lifestyles and emotional wellbeing
- Provide early intervention and prevention

Our goal: Ensure every child and young person has the opportunity to thrive and achieve their full potential.

Who we are

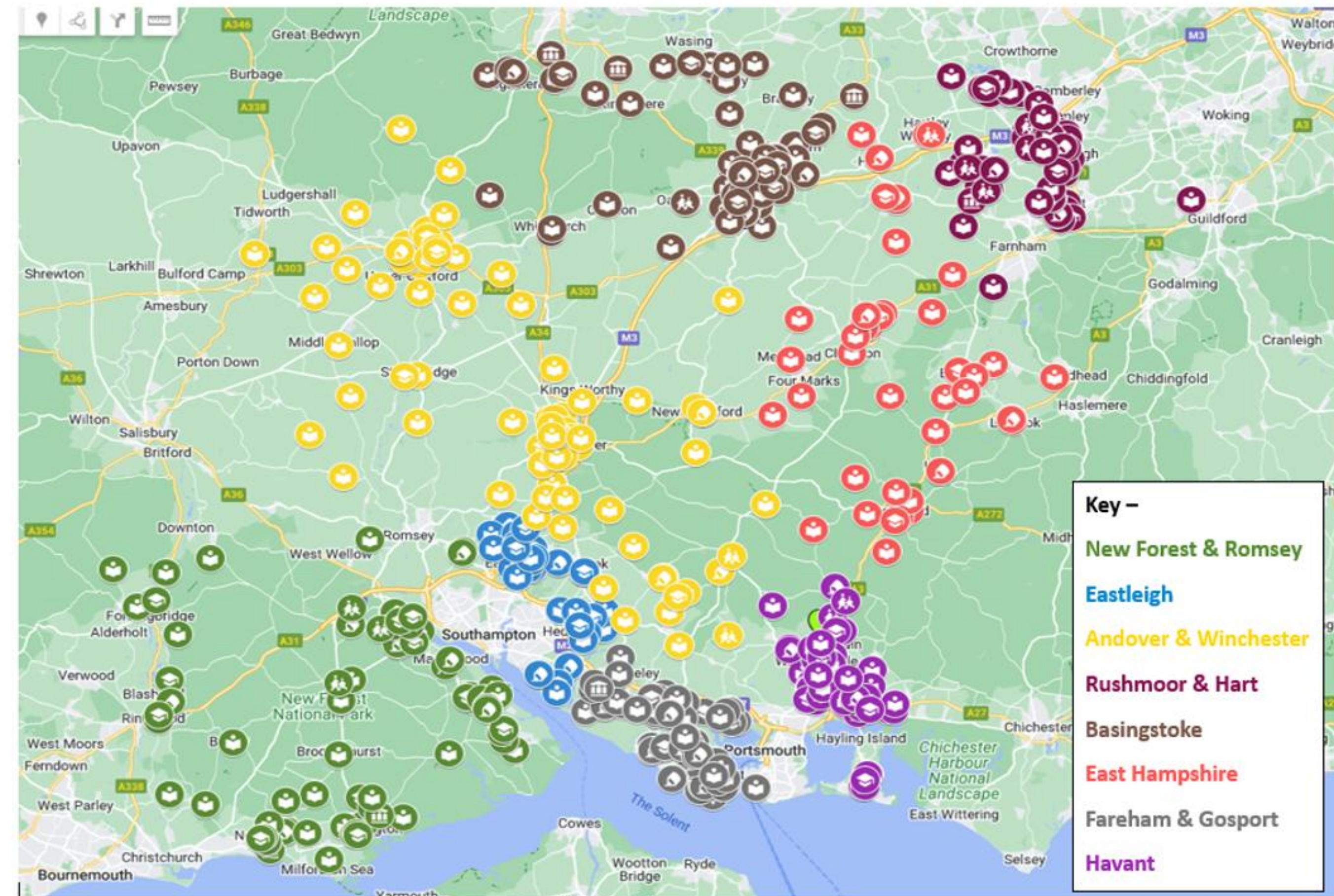
The Public Health Nursing Team is made up of a range of professionals who work together to support children, young people, families, and schools:

- **Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHNs)** with an additional specialist qualification in Public Health Nursing
- **Community Public Health Staff Nurses (CPHSNs)**
- **Community Public Health Nurse Advisors (CPHNAs)**
- **Community Public Health Nurse Assistants (CPHNAs)**
- **Administrative Support Staff**

Our Reach Across Hampshire

Working Across Hampshire's Communities

- 830 schools across Hampshire
- 3,500 Electively Home Educated (EHE) children
- 8 locality-based School Nursing teams
- Support for children and young people aged 5-19 years (up to 25 years for those with additional needs)



Understanding Need and Targeting Support

Our priorities are shaped by local intelligence and the needs of children and young people across Hampshire.

We use

- Demographic profiling
- BeeWell survey findings
- School feedback and requests for support
- Attendance and safeguarding information
- Urgent treatment centre and Emergency Department notifications

Key Challenges

- Emotional wellbeing and mental health
- Childhood obesity
- Health inequalities
- Impact of socioeconomic deprivation
- Increasing complexity of need

Emerging School Themes

- Sleep hygiene and technology use
- Menstrual health
- Repeated absences linked to minor illnesses



Attendance: An Indicator of Health and Wellbeing

Poor attendance can be associated with a range of health and wellbeing factors, including :

Anxiety and emotional wellbeing concerns;
developing signs of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA)
Sleep difficulties and fatigue
Physical health conditions
Family stressors and adversity
Bullying and social isolation
Low self-esteem and confidence

Why This Matters

Improved attendance is associated with:

- ✓ Better educational outcomes
- ✓ Improved wellbeing
- ✓ Increased resilience
- ✓ Better long-term health and life opportunities

How Public Health Nursing Supports Attendance

We help identify and remove health-related barriers to education through:

Early Intervention:

- Identification of health and wellbeing concerns
- Consultation and advice for school staff
- Health and wellbeing assessments
- Emotional wellbeing support
- Goal setting and care planning
- Signposting and referral to appropriate services

Partnership Working

- Advice and consultation
- Early Help processes
- Multi-agency collaboration
- Support around transition periods

Support Available for Schools



Hampshire and
Isle of Wight Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust

Universal Support:

- Health promotion
- Assemblies and workshops
- Digital resources
- Public health campaigns
- Advice, signposting and resources

Targeted Support:

- Public Health Nurse advice for school staff
- Individual health and wellbeing assessments
- One-to-one interventions
- Care planning and goal setting
- Early support where health concerns may impact attendance

Specialist Signposting including SEND:

- Mental Health Support Teams
- CAMHS
- Community services
- Voluntary sector support

Supporting Children Through Key Transitions

Public Health Nursing supports children and young people at critical stages, including:

- School readiness
- Transition to secondary school
- Transition to college or employment
- Elective Home Education pathways
- Return to school following absence

Early support can reduce anxiety and improve engagement with education.

[Links for transition points on our health for kids and health for teens website:](#)

[Starting Primary School - Hampshire - Parents: Health for Kids](#)

[Starting Year 7 | Health for Teens | Hampshire](#)

[Looking after yourself Post-16 | Health for Teens | Hampshire](#)

Public Health Nursing Clinics: Impact and Outcomes

Our clinics provide accessible support before needs escalate

Outcomes Frequently Achieved:

- Improved emotional wellbeing
- Increased resilience and confidence
- Improved engagement with school
- Better attendance
- Improved sleep and healthy routines
- Enhanced self-management of health conditions
- Earlier access to specialist support where required

Benefits for Schools:

- Timely advice and support
- Reduced escalation of concerns
- Improved partnership working
- Better outcomes for pupils



Supporting you from Year 6 to Year 7

Our Digital Offer

Supporting access when, where and how young people need us.

Available Services

-  ChatHealth
-  Health for Teens
-  Health for Kids
-  WhatsApp Channels
-  Digital Referral Forms

Benefits

- Accessible
- Confidential
- Early intervention
- Direct support for young people



[Text ChatHealth for School Nurse Support in Hampshire](#)

Why Work With Public Health Nursing?

We Help Schools To:

- ✓ Identify health-related barriers early
- ✓ Recognise indicators that may lead to future attendance difficulties
- ✓ Support emotional wellbeing and resilience
- ✓ Reduce escalation of unmet health needs
- ✓ Improve access to appropriate support services
- ✓ Promote positive health and wellbeing outcomes

Key Message:

Public Health Nursing supports prevention and early intervention, helping schools identify and respond to rising health and wellbeing concerns before they become entrenched barriers to attendance.

How to Contact Us

Parents, Carers and Professionals

[Digital referral for the 5-19 Hampshire Community Public Health Nursing Service](#)

Young Person Self-Referral

[Young Person self-referral to the Community Public Health Nursing Service](#)

Public Health Nursing Team

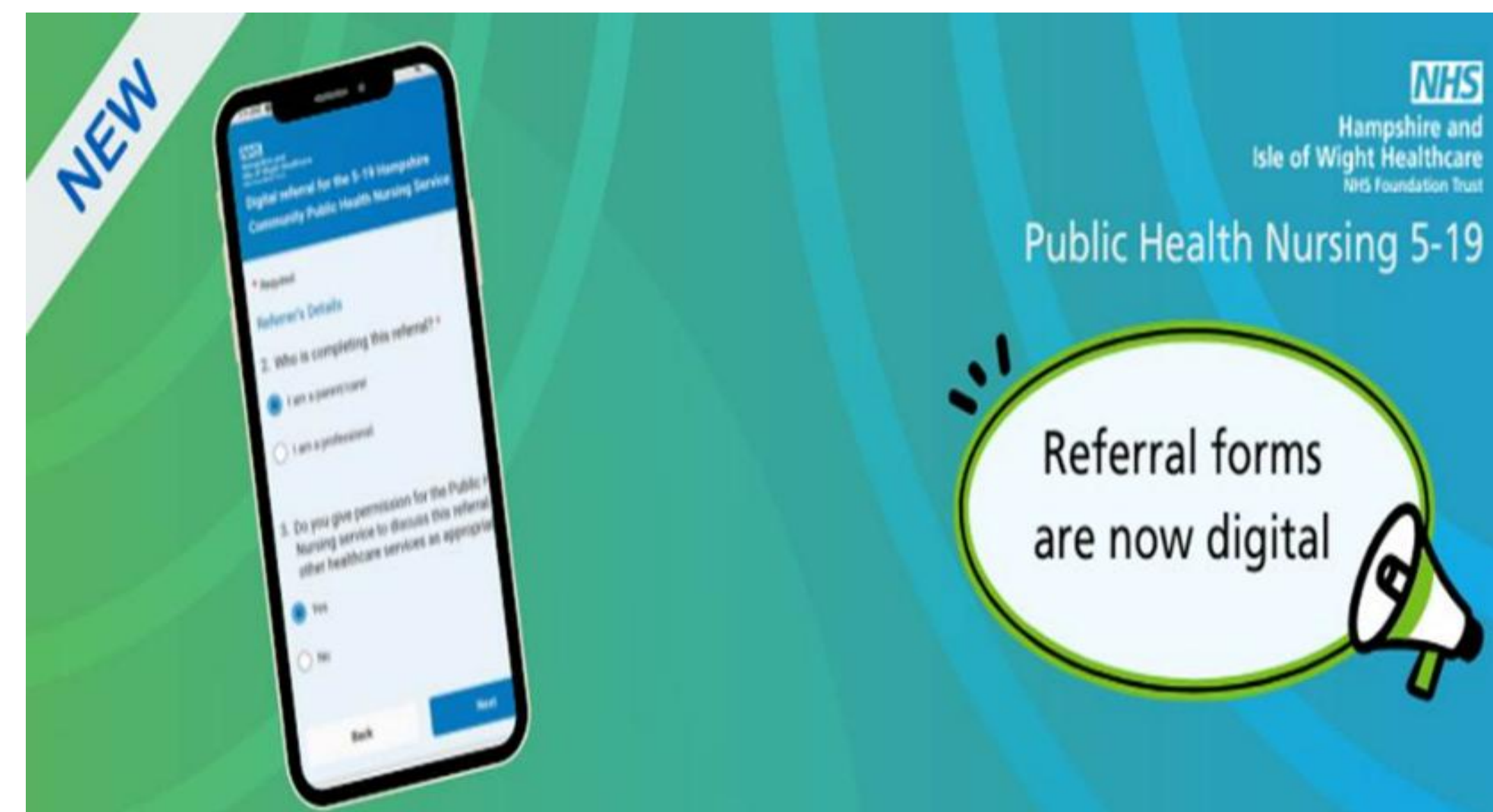
- Advice and Assessment
- Attendance-related support
- Early intervention services

Key Message

Attendance is everyone's business. Public Health Nursing can help schools identify and address health-related barriers to attendance before they become entrenched.



Hampshire and
Isle of Wight Healthcare
NHS Foundation Trust



hiowhealthcare.nhs.uk



We CARE through:



Compassion



Accountability



Respect



Excellence

Understanding EBSA

Dr Sam Beasley

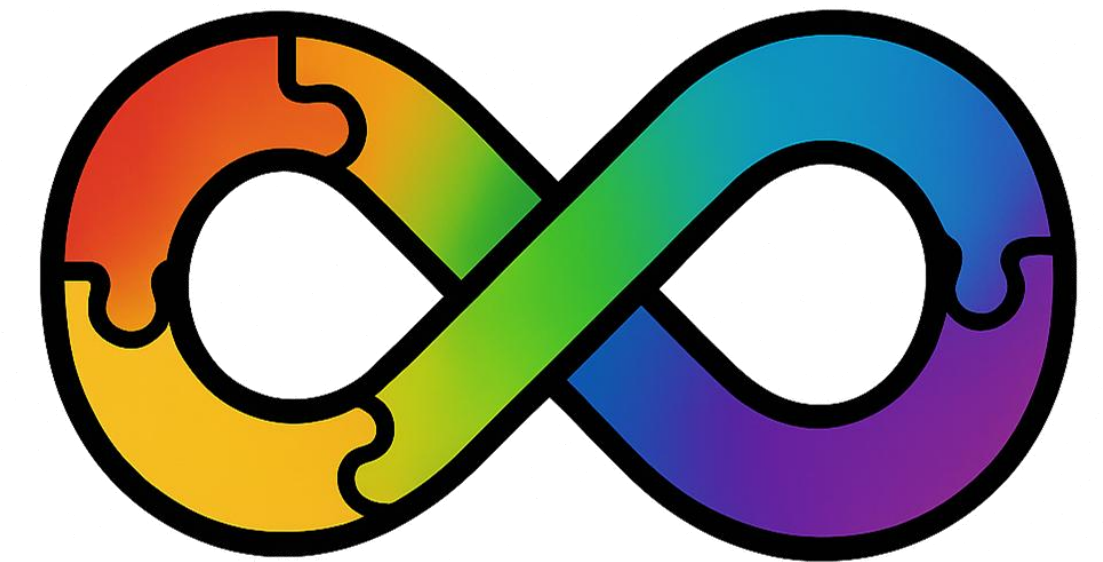
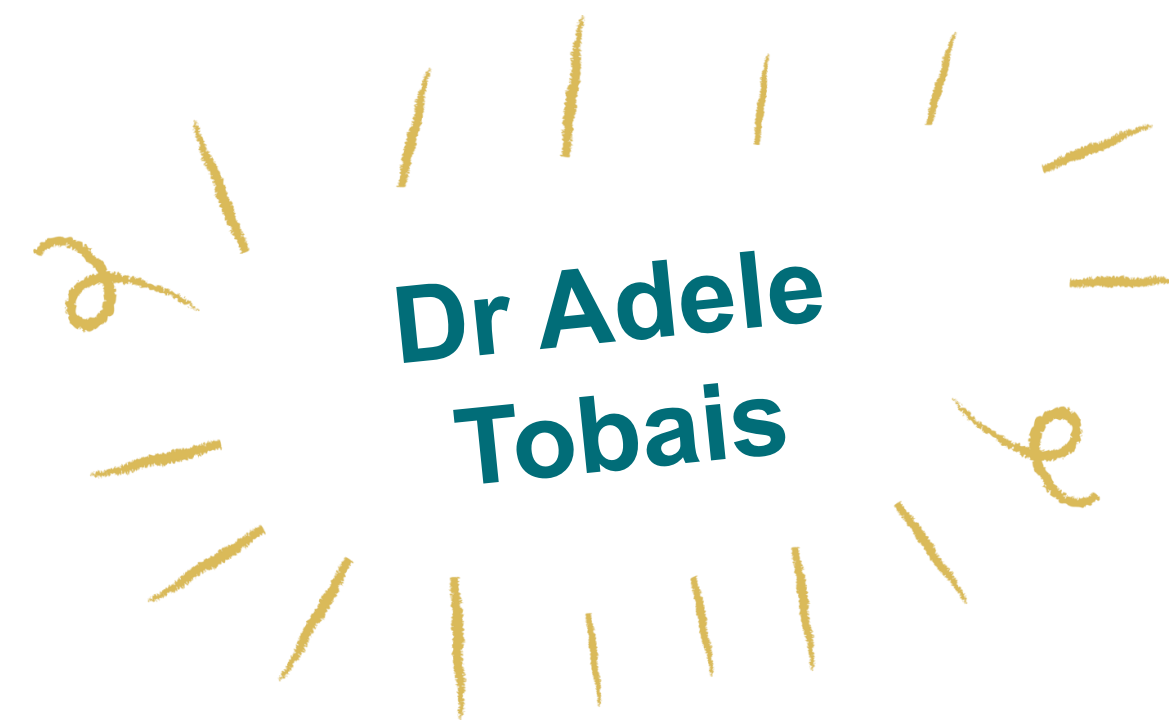
Senior Educational Psychologist

EBSA - A complex picture

There may be just one underlying cause, but usually it's a complex interplay between home, school and within child factors.

Some examples could be to do with:

- Social
- Anxiety
- Academic
- Health & wellbeing
- Sensory
- Family factors
- Change



Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Hampshire County Council good
practice guidance for schools and
other support agencies

July 2026

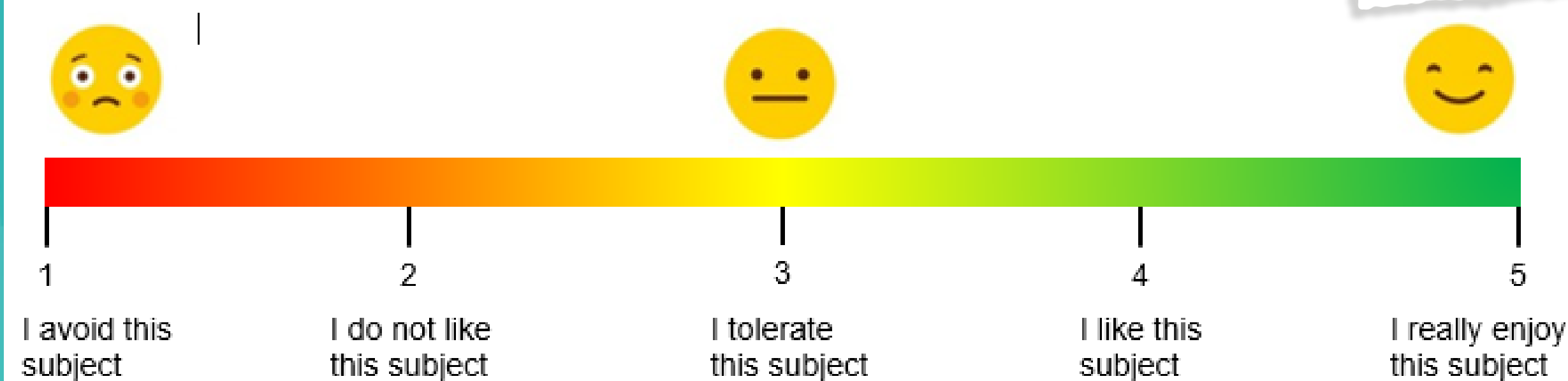
[www.hants.gov.uk/
educational
psychology](http://www.hants.gov.uk/educationalpsychology)



Mapping the Landscape of Your school / college

- Questionnaire and card prompts
- Physical environment
- Social environment
- Learning environment
 - Subject preferences
 - Working in class

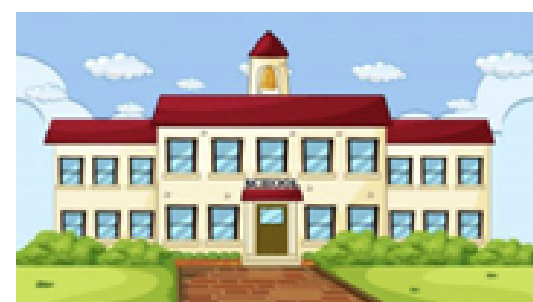
Kate Ripley



The physical environment

Appendix 2 Mapping the Landscape of Your School

Mapping the Landscape of Your School by Kate Ripley
(For accompanying materials, see appendices 8-13)



1. The Physical Environment

Instructions

Look carefully at the map of your school

- Use the highlighter pens to mark how the areas on the map make you feel.
Green = I feel calm and relaxed in this space
Yellow = I feel anxious/uncomfortable in this space
Red = I would like to avoid this space as it makes me very anxious
- For the areas that you have coloured red, what makes you feel unsafe?

- What might the school do to help you feel safer in your 'red' areas?

Thank you for colouring the map.

Secondary Pupil – Student version

Mapping the Landscape of Your School by Kate Ripley
(for supplementary visuals see Appendices 8-14)



1. The Physical Environment

Instructions

- Look carefully at the map of your school
- Use the highlighter pens to mark how the areas on the map make you feel.
Green = I feel calm and relaxed in this space
Yellow = I feel anxious/uncomfortable in this space
Red = I would like to avoid this space as it makes me very anxious
- For the areas that you have coloured red, are there any circumstances, e.g. time of day, which make you feel more safe?

- What might the school do to help you feel safer in your 'red' areas?

College

Mapping the Landscape of Your College



Student version

1. The Physical Environment

Look carefully at the map of your college

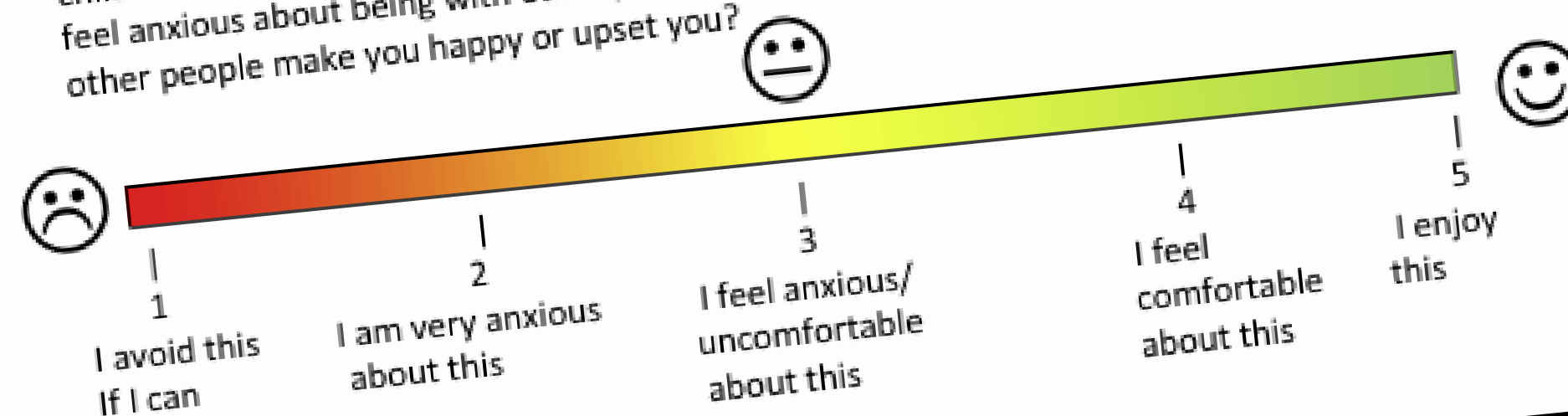
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Yellow = I feel anxious/uncomfortable in this space
Red = I would like to avoid this space as it makes me very anxious
- For the areas that you have coloured red, are there any circumstances, e.g. time of day, which make you feel more safe?



The social environment

2. The Social Environment

During the school day children work with their class and talk to other children and adults. Sometimes this can be fun but sometimes we can feel anxious about being with other people. What things that you do with other people make you happy or upset you?



1 Coming into school in the morning.	1	2	3	4	5
2 Hanging up my coat or putting my bag in the cloakroom	1	2	3	4	5
3 Going into the classroom when the children are all moving round	1	2	3	4	5
4 Finding my job to do when I come in	1	2	3	4	5
5 Finding a place where I can sit	1	2	3	4	5

Appendix 9 Primary cards – Social environment – Mapping the landscape of your school

Coming into school in the morning.



Picture credit: Freepik

Hanging up my coat or putting my bag in the cloakroom.



Picture credit: Pixabay

Going into the classroom when the children are all moving around.



Picture credit: Freepik

Finding my job to do when I come in.



Picture credit: Pixabay

Finding a place where I can sit.



Picture credit: Freepik

Carpet times.



Picture credit: Pixabay

Lining up with my class.



Picture credit: Freepik

Choosing times.



Sitting in the dining hall with other children.

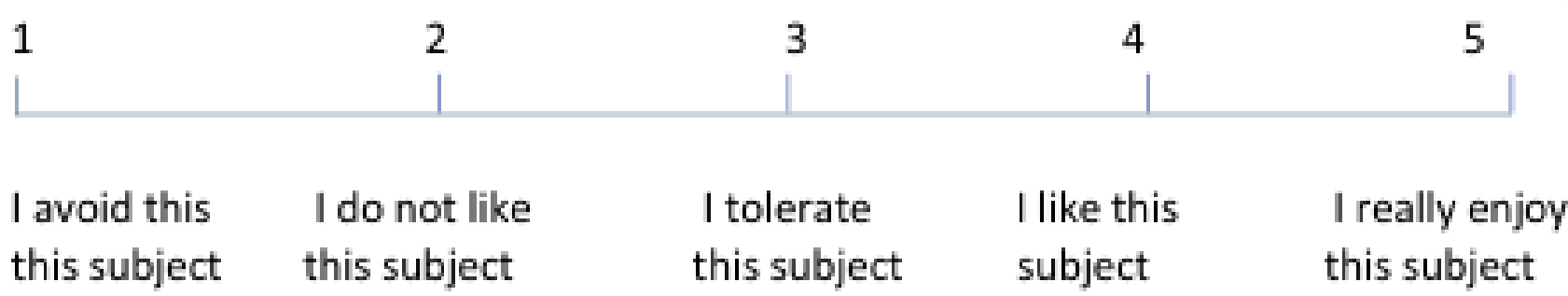


The learning environment

3. The Learning Environment

Subject Preferences

Many different subjects are taught in school and some we find easier and more interesting than others. Rate the subjects on the list on a scale of 1 – 5.



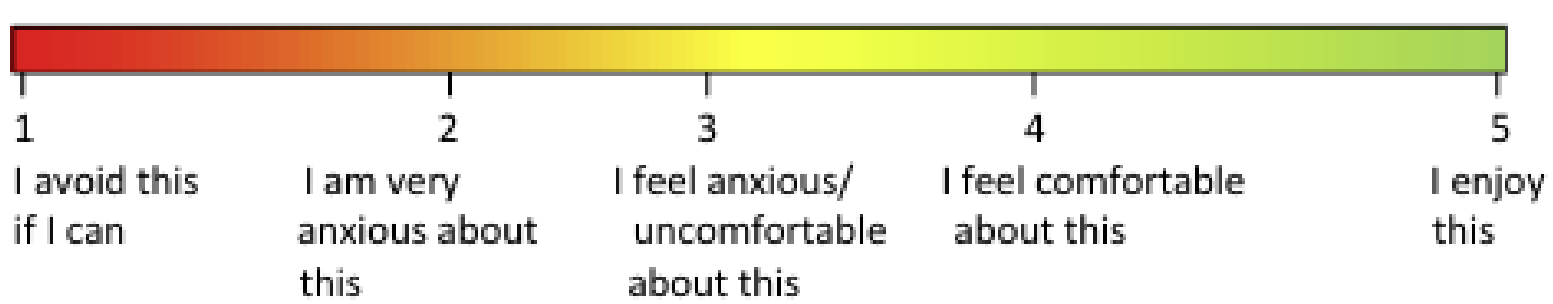
e.g. If you really enjoy maths ...

List of subjects	Rating
Maths	5

My subject ratings are

Subject	Rating	Subject	Rating
Science		Art	
IT		DT	
English		Geography	
PE/Games		French	
Drama		Spanish	
History		Other language	
RE		Dance	
Maths		Music	

Classes involve different ways of working and some we will find more comfortable than others. Use the 5 point rating scale to indicate how you feel about different things that happen in classes.



	1	2	3	4	5
27 Sharing equipment in practical lessons, e.g. art or DT.					
28 When other students try to distract me.					
29 When the teacher introduces a new topic I know little or nothing about					
30 Class tests and assessments					

Look at your rating about what happens in class. Can you describe your ideal class/lesson.



Instructions for adults

Primary Age

Adult version

Mapping the Landscape of Your School by Kate Ripley



1. The Physical Environment

Equipment

Map of the school, showing all areas labelled, e.g. include outside space, bike sheds, toilets, corridors, stairs, hall, resourced provision, SEN base, etc.
Coloured highlighter pens: red, yellow, green.

Instructions for the children

Go through the instructions with them to ensure that they understand the map and the areas that it shows.

- Look carefully at the map of your school
- Use the highlighter pens to mark how the areas on the map make you feel.
Green = I feel calm and relaxed in this space
Yellow = I feel anxious/uncomfortable in this space
Red = I would like to avoid this space as it makes me very anxious

- For the areas that you have coloured red, what makes you feel unsafe?

2. The Social Environment

Instructions for staff

Explain the task carefully to the children so that they understand that some social encounters can be positive but others may cause anxiety. Check that they understand the rating scales and how to complete them.



During the school day children work with their class and talk to children and adults. Sometimes this can be fun but sometimes we can feel anxious about being with other people. What things that you do with other people make you happy or upset you?



1 Coming into school in the morning.	1	2	3	4	5
2 Hanging up my coat or putting my bag in the cloakroom	1	2	3	4	5
3 Going into the classroom when the children are all moving round	1	2	3	4	5
4 Finding my job to do when I come in	1	2	3	4	5
5 Finding a place where I can sit	1	2	3	4	5

Visual supports

Appendix 8 Primary cards – Learning environment – Mapping the landscape of your school



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Appendix 10 Secondary cards – Learning environment – Mapping the landscape of your school



Appendix 10 Rating scale



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Appendix 12 Subject cards





Thank you!

Children's
Services

School Attendance Support Team

Autumn 2026-2027

Identified drivers of absence

The School Attendance Support Team consistently identify that persistent and severe absence is driven by overlapping and interacting factors, most commonly:

Health and wellbeing – illness, long-term medical needs, mental health and anxiety	SEND and unmet additional needs – particularly where provision is not timely or well matched	Emotional distress and school anxiety (EBSA) – often linked to transitions, peer relationships or prior attendance patterns	Family and contextual pressures – including housing instability, poverty, parental ill-health and safeguarding concerns	Disengagement and unauthorised absence – including term-time holidays, refusal, partial attendance and reduced parental confidence	Access and practical barriers – transport, placement issues and unavoidable disruption
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Improving School Attendance Safeguarding Leads (Primary Care)

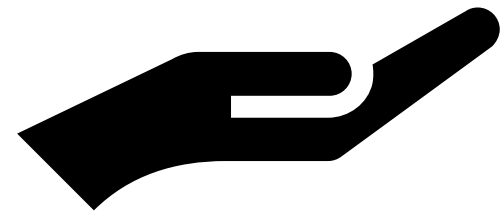
May 2026 Session objectives

To remind professionals that "Children and young people attendance at school is still the key priority for Children Services and Education - as Children not in school are not able to enjoy, achieve and be able to make progress. Without eyes on these children are also difficult to safeguard"

To review the attendance patterns of children and young people at school in Hampshire and to understand where progress has been noted and where further improvements will need to be made

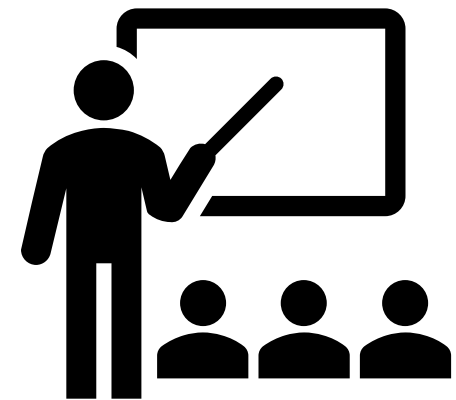
To ask Public Health Professionals to help support us in challenging some parents to work with schools closer and ensure that parents are not a barrier to their children attending school

School Attendance Support Team



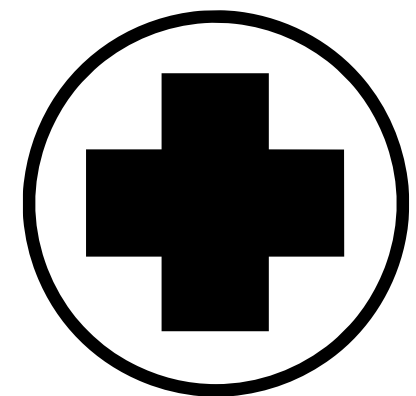
Attendance Support

Provide advice, support, and guidance to schools, parents, and professionals on attendance-related queries and concerns through a dedicated triage approach. Work collaboratively with local partners to deliver multi-agency support for pupils and families with schools to agree and implement a clear, structured plan for every severely absent pupil.



Reintegration

Identification of vulnerable children, who are proving hard to place on a school roll and to agree and deploy suitable resource and expertise to support the child, parent/ carer and school ahead of, during and following a child's reintegration to school through coordinated support, planning, and partnership working.



Medical Referral/S19

Triage of referrals from schools for pupils unable to attend due to medical reasons, identifying suitable short-term packages of alternative provision and supporting reintegration into school. Responding to Section 19 requests from parents to ensure statutory compliance, with all decisions guided by the child's best interests.



Penalty Notices

Prioritises a support-first approach while administering penalty notice processes for schools with consistency and compliance, overseeing the Notice to Improve process where support is appropriate but not engaged with, to give parents a final opportunity before a penalty notice is considered—not for unauthorised holidays—and monitoring the process to ensure fairness, alongside applying the national limit of two penalty notices within three years to break cycles of repeat offending.



Legal Intervention

Providing early support to families to resolve attendance issues before legal action is considered, encouraging schools to initiate Early Help and other interventions. Reviewing referrals and evidence to assess suitability for prosecution, ensuring legal processes are only pursued when in the child's best interests, and statutory duties are met.

Legal Intervention



Legal Intervention is a last resort.

- LIT is only considered when all appropriate support has been offered and exhausted
- It is used only when it is proportionate and appropriate to place a parent at risk of prosecution
- LIT is not an attendance strategy – it is a statutory response when engagement has not improved attendance
- Progression to LIT requires clear evidence that support came first

LIT may be appropriate when:

- The child has not engaged with support offered
- The parent/carer has not engaged or has declined support
- Attendance concerns cannot be explained by unmet SEND, health or safeguarding needs without escalation

Key principle: Support first. Evidence always. Legal action last.

Requirements of a School Referral



We often hear “we’ve tried everything” — the referral must show what that means in practice.

Referrals must clearly evidence:

- Robust attendance interventions prior to referral
- Clear understanding of the “why” behind the absence
- What was offered, to whom, and over what timescale

Strategies used by the school:

- What actions were taken
- How the pupil and parent responded
- What was reviewed or adapted when impact was limited

Clear evidence of support across relevant areas:

- Attendance and pastoral support
- SEND adjustments and reviews (where applicable)
- Wellbeing, behaviour or reintegration planning
- Family engagement and Early Help involvement

Internal provision or flexible support:

- What the internal offer looked like (space, staffing, structure)
- Purpose and intended impact on attendance
- Review points and why it did or did not work

Strong referrals tell a clear story: Rationale ▪ Support ▪ Timescales ▪ Impact

Working Together To Improve School Attendance - updates

New operational expectations

- Registers taken at the same time for all pupils

Stronger attendance practice

- Less routine use of medical evidence
- Greater focus on SEND, mental health and reasonable adjustments
- Remote education only as a last resort.
- Young carers identified as a priority cohort

Attendance coding clarifications

- E, Q, Y6 & Y7 codes clarified
- C2 statistical treatment clarified
- B code supervision requirements clarified

No major policy changes, but higher expectations around consistency, accuracy of coding, reasonable adjustments and attendance recording.

Working together to improve school attendance

**Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities**

July 2026

Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities

July 2026

Attendance registers must be taken at the same time for all pupils

- This is probably the most significant operational clarification.
- The updated guidance states that schools must take the attendance register at the same time for all registered pupils during the morning session and the required afternoon session.
- This may impact schools that have developed staggered registration practices or bespoke arrangements.

Implications

- ✓ Review MIS registration settings.
- ✓ Review staggered starts and bespoke timetables.
- ✓ Ensure attendance is not being recorded at different times for different groups.

Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities

July 2026

2. Greater clarity around medical evidence

The DfE has reinforced that schools should **not routinely require medical evidence** for every illness absence.

Medical evidence should generally only be requested where:

- There are genuine concerns about authenticity.
- Illness is prolonged, recurring, or complex.
- Evidence will help determine suitable support or reasonable adjustments.

Message for schools:

Avoid blanket requests for GP letters and certificates.

Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities

July 2026

3. Stronger emphasis on SEND, health needs and reasonable adjustments

The update strengthens references to:

- Equality Act duties.
- Reasonable adjustments.
- Mental health barriers.
- Time-limited phased returns.

Schools to demonstrate they have:

- ✓ explored reasonable adjustments,
- ✓ worked with families,
- ✓ considered SEND and health factors before escalating attendance concerns.

Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities

July 2026

4. Remote education is a last resort

The DfE has clarified that remote education should not become an alternative to attendance at school.

Remote education should:

- be temporary,
- form part of a reintegration plan,
- follow consideration of reasonable adjustments and support first.

5. Young carers explicitly identified

Young carers are now highlighted more clearly as a cohort schools should monitor and support when analysing attendance patterns.

School leaders should ask:

- Can we identify young carers?
- Do we routinely analyse their attendance separately?

Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities

July 2026

Clarifications on attendance codes

Code E - Authorised absence following exclusion where no alternative provision has yet been arranged.

- Clarification has been provided to support consistent use.

Code Q - Unable to attend because of lack of access arrangements.

- Further guidance added on when appropriate, particularly relevant for some pupils with SEND.

Code Y6 - Unable to attend in accordance with public health guidance or law.

- Additional clarification has been added.

Code Y7 - Unable to attend because of another unavoidable cause.

- The DfE has clarified expectations to reduce inappropriate use of this code.

Working together to improve school attendance

**Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities**

July 2026

7. Clarification on Code C2

The DfE has clarified the statistical meaning of C2:

Leave of absence for a compulsory school age pupil on an agreed part-time timetable.

The clarification reinforces how this code is counted nationally and supports more consistent recording of part-time timetables.

8. Approved Educational Activity (B Code) supervision requirements clarified

Further clarification has been added regarding supervision arrangements for approved educational activities.

Schools need to be satisfied that appropriate supervision is in place when recording B code attendance.

Working together to improve school attendance

Statutory guidance for maintained
schools, academies, independent schools
and local authorities

July 2026

9. Leave of absence: no blanket approaches

The updated guidance reinforces that schools should not operate blanket policies that automatically approve categories of absence.

Headteachers must continue to consider requests on an individual basis against the "exceptional circumstances" test.

Livecloud



At the last hub you agreed to at least one of the following ...

Action – order of priority (top 3?)

Parent Communication and Engagement

- Clear messaging around attendance expectations.
- Visual roadmap for parents regarding the stages of attendance, shared at the start of term.
- Attendance data shared when parents report absence.
- Earlier contact with families before attendance becomes a serious concern.
- Make it real – what it means in terms of lost learning (and share with pupils).
- Communication about the impact of lateness.
- Regular attendance information in newsletters etc.
- Coffee mornings to watch CAHMS video together, school nursing and EP events, PBS workshops (including by personal invite). Play the videos at other events e.g. parent/carers events.
- Attendance drop-in clinics.
- Review coding especially 'i' over a period of time
- Partnerships across schools

Key aim: Increase parental awareness and encourage early action.

Early Intervention and Threshold Monitoring

- Monitoring attendance at 93%, 95% and even 96% rather than waiting for 90%.
- Develop a staged approach of support/intervention for those at risk of poor attendance.
- Letters and parent contact before absence reaches persistent levels.
- Watchlists for pupils causing concern.
- Use Family Support Workers/HSLWs for early intervention. Visits from key staff to encourage attendance.
- Book targeted support meetings earlier.
- Targeted small group work based on strengths and resilience – attendance mentoring by UPR/UPS staff (shared at secondary hubs)
- Where a day of the week is flagged – put on something additional e.g. special breakfast club

Key aim: Identify and support pupils before attendance deteriorates.

Data Sharing and Staff Accountability

- Discuss attendance in weekly staff meetings.
- Share pupils below attendance thresholds with all staff.
- More frequent internal reporting of data patterns and focus on group analysis to spot potential issues e.g. e.g. FSM, or year group. Daily absence information and/or those below 95% weekly, sent to class staff.
- Use IDSR data to set targets, create action plans and support particular families
- Key roles for staff e.g. tutors given time to follow up on attendance. Review support with tutors for pupils with challenging attendance.
- Support around conversations with younger members of staff.

Key aim: Create a culture where all staff contribute to improving attendance.

Targeted Support and Inclusion

- Tailored approaches for different attendance bands.
- Bespoke support for individual pupils and families. Promoting reasonable adjustments e.g. timetable hot spot.
- Focus on SEN and behaviour strategies
- Collaboration with health professionals.
- EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) training.

Key aim: Remove barriers to attendance and provide appropriate support.

Transition and Belonging

- Proactively working with feeder primary schools. Attendance focus at transition meetings.
- Make links with key families before they start at the school. Inviting vulnerable pupils to meet teachers before term starts.
- As part of 'new starter' pack – more detailed letter re attendance.
- Soft starts and flexible approaches with a THRIVE practitioner at the entrance.
- Daily staff check-ins. "We missed you today" and "Get well soon" messages.
- Developing a sense of belonging: what simple gesture do you do?
- Project-based incentives and engagement activities e.g. in September how much has your pumpkin seed planted in summer grown?
- Relational approach.

Key aim: Improve attendance through stronger relationships and school connectedness.

Attendance Visibility and Awareness

- Visible displays to reinforce culture of good attendance.
- Attendance roadmaps and staged journey diagrams.
- Sharing attendance with classes weekly.
- Keeping attendance high-profile in newsletters.
- Helping children understand why attendance matters.
- Building resilience work into the curriculum.

Key aim: Build a shared understanding of attendance across the school community.

Rewards, Recognition and Incentives

- Tailored rewards for classes, pupils and parents e.g. Extra playtime for highest-attending classes; jump the queue; year 11 prom target.
- Attendance certificates issued more frequently (including for improved attendance).
- Attendance reward shops. Attendance fest!
- Making school 'unmissable' – every minute counts strapline
- Having a personal responsibility e.g. plants, dog, H&S check with caretaker.

Key aim: Celebrate and encourage positive attendance behaviours.

Punctuality Focus

- Increased focus on being on time.
- Communication about the impact of lateness.
- Morning routines and responsibilities (for example, watering plants before registration).
- Meet and greet to challenge lateness

Key aim: Improve punctuality alongside attendance.
