



# AfC Virtual School Attendance Booklet 2023

If a child misses	that equals...	which is...	and over 13 year of school that is...
1 day a fortnight (90% attendance)	19 days a year	4 weeks a year	Nearly 1½ years
1 day a week (80% attendance)	38 days a year	8 weeks a year	Over 2½ years
2 days a week (60% attendance)	76 days a year	16 weeks a year	Over 5 years
3 days a week (40% attendance)	114 days a year	24 weeks a year	Nearly 8 years

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# Aims of the attendance brochure initiative

The Department for Education's children in need review concluded in 2019 that: 'for the first time, 1.6 million children had needed a social worker in the previous six years, the equivalent to 1 in 10 children or an average of three children in every classroom'.

The aim of AfC Virtual School, Extended Duties team is to work with education settings to improve the educational outcomes of children with a social worker. Our aim is to promote practice that supports children's engagement in education, recognising that attending an education setting can be an important factor in helping to keep children safe from harm. We have a multi-agency approach and are working collaboratively to raise aspirations for this cohort of children.

We have collated examples of best practice of boosting and maintaining high attendance from a variety of schools from across three local authority areas: Kingston, Richmond, Windsor and Maidenhead.

Here is a range of whole school attendance strategies and examples for you to share and use in your own setting.

## Examples

- **Termly:** 100%, 95% and improvement certificates (even if only 2% rise from 33% to 35%)
- **School liaison officer:** If a student is not in school, they ring daily and visit the home, all staff have letters regarding absence and consistently sent home for each session or lesson missed. Student Attendance champions in every class
- **Student leadership:** Attendance year captains for each year group
- **Class champions and year captains** present powerpoints on attendance to each class as well as powerpoints on the impact of absence shared at parents' evenings on why 95% is not good enough
- **Waves of parent intervention:** Early intervention - groups of parents with 90% to 95% absence meet the deputy headteacher at each parent evening for presentation and discussion. Attendance clinics with the deputy headteacher, head of year, parent, carer and child and an attendance target set and monitored daily for four weeks. If not met, they progress to the attendance panel with the school governor
- **Challenge parents** who want to take holidays or dentist appointments
- **Attendance assemblies**
- **Punctuality cup:** Every year group and every week someone receives a box of chocolates - celebrate success
- **School door duty in morning:** list of those students who are late - workshop on attendance during registration with deputy headteacher
- **Attendance triangle** in every classroom

# Alwyn and Courthouse Federation

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- School attendance officer who will phone home if a pupil is not in school
- Home visits if deemed necessary.
- Reminders regarding how important attendance is.
- Waves of parent intervention – phone call, letter, meeting with attendance lead or head of school.
- Challenge parents who request time off for holidays or dentist appointments.
- Staff greeting children who are more vulnerable when coming into school .
- Use of the ERSA toolkit.
- EWO link to assist with the more complex cases.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Accessing the above school wide strategies plus:
  - engagement with the Attachment Aware Schools Award
  - work with the social worker
  - nurture (Courthouse) and ELSA (both schools) if needed

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Return to school for two pupils who have emotionally related school avoidance
- Reduction in requests for dentist appointments

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Enabling meaningful participation in their own lives: encouraging pupil autonomy- for example, Teas in the Trees sixth form enterprise- weekly refreshments selling at local church, regular school council meetings with elected members, hygiene cupboard stock monitors and weekly distributions.
- Daily attendance log for morning and afternoon pupil data: including times of calls to parents, arrival times, reason for absence. Collated via weekly, one sheet to ascertain average number of calls required to parents to remind them of our absence reporting procedure, overall attendance, authorised attendance, unauthorised attendance, lateness and both severe and persistent absentees. Policy and absence reporting procedures reminder letter circulated to parents at the beginning of each academic year and re-sent in individual circumstances if required.
- Fortnightly: safeguarding and attendance meetings- ragging and strategising for pupils with persistent and severe absences.
- Individual pupil case studies deep dive with pupil arrival times altered accordingly in relation to the reason behind reduction of attendance and to encourage improved attendance.
- Multi-agency provisions on site at all times: nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy, speech and language to provide on-site support, including health, dietetic and paediatric reviews and clinics, therapy space for on-site occupational therapy physio clinics to allow pupils to reduce absences for appointments, etc.
- The Bronze SLA packaging- five days' commission delivered over the academy year equating in three hours once a month for strategic oversight of severe absences.
- One member from SLT presents every day in the main reception area at the beginning and end of the day for parent and pupil greetings.

## What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?

- Interventions teacher: six hybrid learners receiving bespoke packages-receiving a range of home visits, community meet ups or zoom classroom sessions, virtual attendance of departmental and whole school assemblies, daily access to Tim and Carmen WOWNOW virtual club and home learning sent weekly, fortnightly or termly (case dependent)
- On-site drama therapy, music therapy for specifically referred pupils.
- Pupil group to Hurst Pool every Tuesday: four to six are Pupil Premium students including one student on a CPP.
- After school club: five to 12 pupils that attend our weekly Thursday drama after school club are Pupil Premium students including one student on a CPP.
- Children in need meetings with multi-agency professionals on site to discuss pupils.
- Attachment Awards School Award Silver.
- High education psychologist package, including on-site workshops and meetings with parents.
- Bespoke parent, carer on-site, virtual workshops to support and upskill.

## As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...

- An increase in students with 95% and above attendance for autumn term this year in comparison to previous year and a 4.3% increase from the academic year before last.
- An increase in students with 90% and above for autumn term this year in comparison to previous year and a 7.6% increase from the academic year before last.
- 100% attendance for male looked after children pupil for the current academic year.
- 89.7% attendance for female CPP pupil (see Hurst Pool and drama club data) for the current academic year with remaining 10.3% attendance for medical appointments only.

## Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?

- The school issues a weekly Class Attendance Award.
- Full details of the winning classes and whole-school cumulative attendance data are published in the fortnightly school newsletter.
- The importance of good school attendance and punctuality is shared with parents and carers in the accompanying articles.
- 100% attendance certificates and badges are awarded by the headteacher.
- Pre-Covid, the school arranged special annual excursions for children with 100% school attendance, for example visits to the theatre. This has not yet been re-introduced due to budgetary constraints in the last two years.
- Attendance raffles have also been held with children being issued one ticket for each full week at school in each half term.

## Daily activity

- Notification of pupil absence from parents and carers is received by email, by phone or given directly to staff at school. This information is entered into the absence book which is held in the school office.
- An absence text is sent where no specific reason for the absence has been given. The parent and carer response is recorded in the absence book and entered onto the class register. Follow-up phone calls are made where no response has been forthcoming.
- If a response is still not forthcoming, a follow up email is sent to parents and carers of persistent absentees, vulnerable pupils or in any cases where the reason for the absence is in doubt.
- The headteacher (DSL) and the safeguarding lead (DDSL) are notified immediately of any concerns relating to absence
- Medical evidence to support absence due to illness and proof of appointments are requested where appropriate.

## Ongoing activity

- Continuous monitoring of attendance takes place with a series of letters being issued where attendance is poor and does not improve. This can culminate in parents and carers being asked to attend a meeting with the local authority-allocated education welfare officer.
- All letters to parents and carers are individually tailored to the set of circumstances around their child's absence. Although this is time-consuming, it guarantees that every parent or carer receives an individualised letter detailing the consequences of missing school and the effect that this can have upon their child's education.
- In some cases, where a pupil has had many absences due to illness, a referral to the School nurse is made - but only with parent or carer consent.
- Monitoring and looking for patterns of absence within families and for pupils who are regularly absent on the same day of the week takes place.

- Contact may also be made with schools attended by siblings to gain a wider view.
- written requests for term time holiday are passed to the headteacher for a decision on authorisation. The school will only authorise leave in very exceptional circumstances, as set out in our attendance policy. A formal letter of response will be sent to the parent or carer advising them of the headteacher's decision and also that they are at risk of receiving a fixed penalty notice where appropriate.
- Class teachers are informed of any letters regarding attendance and term-time absence that are sent to parents and carers.
- Class teachers are provided with attendance data for parent teacher meetings and also for their annual end-of-year report-writing, as lack of attendance can be linked in some cases with lack of academic progress.
- In all parent and carer teacher meetings, attendance is discussed as a priority, for example it is heavily emphasised in the welcome meeting at the beginning of the academic year as well as in the termly meetings.
- Attendance is also discussed by the headteacher when initially meeting parents and carers who have applied for a place to join the school.
- Attendance data is carefully analysed and various pupil groupings can be disaggregated to demonstrate the impact when constructing absence case studies. This information can be shared with governors and other interested parties, for example the school improvement partner.
- When invited, the headteacher and the safeguarding lead attend legal attendance meetings at York Street, Twickenham with the Education Welfare Service and with parents or carers. In these meetings, a decision may be made to proceed to court warnings and ultimately to court procedure.
- Attendance may also be discussed with individual children on an age-appropriate basis, for example if a child becomes reluctant to come to school. This type of intervention can support the child and the parent or carer – (see Case Study 1 data in Section 3).

## **Working with the Educational Welfare Service - (EWS)**

- The school purchases additional education welfare officer time from the local authority to maximise opportunities to address school attendance issues and to track, monitor and liaise with families in this regard. The education welfare officer is based at the school for one day per week.
- A designated attendance officer also operates within our school and is in regular contact with the local authority-allocated education welfare officer. Their weekly case-load includes pupils with whom there is already involvement as well as new referrals who have been identified through data analysis or through a staff-initiated 'Cause for concern'.
- Our education welfare officer works with families where a pupil is a persistent absentee and also liaises in cases where we have not authorised absences.
- During the weekly meetings that are held in school, our education welfare officer has a set of tasks and guidelines to work through. This includes telephone calls, face-to-face meetings with parents and carers and the establishment of attendance contracts with them and also referrals to outside agencies (where appropriate).
- Work with a family may culminate in the recommendation for a legal attendance meeting which may lead to the issue of court warnings and fines as detailed above.



## **In the case of extended unauthorised term-time absence, for example a holiday:**

- On the pupil's return to school, the relevant paperwork will be completed, signed by the headteacher and then submitted to the Fixed Penalty Notice team at the EWS. EWS then reviews each case and issues the fixed penalty notice if the conditions are met.

## **Extended absence from school:**

- Where a pupil is absent because they have gone away and we have not been given a return date, we will contact the parent or carer on a regular basis and we will endeavour to obtain that information. In cases where that information is not forthcoming, or if the pupil does not return to school on the expected date, a referral will be made via the Single Point of Access to Child Missing Education (CME) at AfC or Hounslow CME in the case of a Hounslow resident.

## **Ongoing training:**

- The Education Welfare Service holds periodic attendance officer meetings for primary schools in Kingston and Richmond. These have the aim of sharing best practice. Our attendance officer is made available to attend these.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- In the case of an absent pupil who is designated as a child in need or who is included in a child protection plan, the initial call to the parent or carer made by the attendance officer is expedited, unless a clear reason for the absence is known in advance or the school has been notified in a timely fashion on the day (see case study 2 data).
- Equally, any follow-up phone calls and email contact with the parent or carer in connection with the absence of vulnerable children will receive priority status.
- All pupils deemed as vulnerable in any respect, as well as all persistent absentees, receive this level of attention.
- The headteacher (DSL) and the safeguarding lead (DDSL) are both notified of any concerns relating to the absence of children in these categories. This absence information is then further shared with the allocated social worker of the child in question.
- Any punctuality issue that has become a cause for concern, such as consistently late arrival at school, will also be discussed with the parent or carer and shared with the child's social worker.
- The group of pupils who are discussed at the weekly education welfare officer meetings and for whom action steps are being taken, is currently large. Nevertheless any new referral to this group will always be expedited if the child is designated to be within the key categories of child in need or is included within a child protection plan.

## As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...

- **Case study 1: School refuser** - as a result of the provision of supportive one-to-one discussion with an individual child, where their increased attendance was regularly celebrated, the following improvement was seen:
  - Autumn term 2022 - 59.42%
  - Spring term 2023 - 80.17%
- **Case study 2: Children in need pupil** - as a result of close communication generated between the DSL, the education welfare officer or attendance officer, the social worker and the parent, this child's school attendance improved as follows:
  - Autumn term 2022 - 68.12%
  - Spring term 2023 - 85.34%

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Family liaison officer employed.
- Breakfast club.
- Early or slightly later start if families are in an emergency situation.
- Fines for holidays and unauthorised leave.
- Attendance certificates in school.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Monitoring their attendance and discussing this in meetings. Providing support where necessary to develop better attendance.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Less holidays are being taken.
- An understanding that coming in at 10am is better than being off all day (for short term support). If you are tired or feeling unwell, have a lie in and then come in.
- Building a relationship with vulnerable families to help develop better attendance.

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Newsletter, parent coffee mornings encourages attendance - highlights the impact of attendance on children's outcomes.
- Importance of attendance highlighted at new reception parents meeting.
- Attendance officer tracks attendance, liaises with parents and senior leadership team and shares data on all children highlighting successes and areas where attendance is falling.
- Waves of parent intervention - informal conversations, letters to inform parents that attendance is below where it needs to be, strategies to improve attendance shared with parents, referrals to education welfare officer, meeting with headteacher as needed.
- Information for parents - when to keep your child off school poster used as a tool to encourage attendance.
- UNICEF - Rights, Respecting School Award, Article 28 highlighted to parents which focuses on the right to education-steering group.
- Challenge parents who want to take holidays or dentist appointments.
- Persistent absence children tracked rigorously by year group leads, headteacher and deputy head.
- Increases in attendance celebrated with families-letters, conversations, etc.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Accessing the above school wide strategies plus:
- Parent and pupil meeting - informal in school with headteacher or ELSA.
- Strategies to support with morning routines-alarm clocks, laminated now and next pictures.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- One boy in Year 11 who is a child in need has increased attendance from 84%to 86%.
- Persistent absence attendance - 70% of children who were persistently absence in autumn have improved attendance, 15% are no longer persistently absence, 9% have seen a slight decrease due to illness.

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Certificates for outstanding attendance.
- Internal referrals for support with key trusted adults.
- Work with tutors and tracking system.
- Poster campaign about importance around attendance.
- Communications with parents through centralised consistent letter system.
- Clear planned meetings with education welfare officer and heads of year.
- Parent meetings and engagement with behaviour mentor, pastoral support worker and PPG champions.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Every child in need and child protection student has key trusted adult in school.
- Safe spaces, emotional regulation with school dogs.
- Weekly pastoral meetings with key team members.
- Fortnightly all staff updates and spotlights on key students.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Currently above national average and local authority average as a result of hard work involving pastoral team, heads of years and education welfare officer.
- Improved working relationship with key parents, carers and school staff.
- Increased engagement from key students across the school including extracurricular involvement and intervention attendance.

# Cookham Dean Primary School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Daily recording reported to SLT
- EWO meetings every term with follow up meetings to understand barriers to attendance
- Breakfast Club funded by local charity
- Attachment figure in the morning ie. cook, TA providing small breakfast
- Whole staff understanding of barriers to attendance
- Parent meetings to discuss barriers to attendance and how school can help
- Children to come in early
- Soft start to the morning
- Headteacher on the gate every morning (with a smile!

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- All of the above

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Attendance for some children is improving
- Specific children cannot overcome barriers to attendance without parental support
- There has to be a whole school and parent strategy to support the child

# Cookham Rise Primary School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

The Attendance Team meets regularly so that we can share our knowledge of families, look at any changes in absence data and decide upon the best support route.

Our office team is very supportive and knows where we have concerns about attendance so that they can inform the leadership team about absences as early as possible.

We run a Sunrise Club from 8am to 8.45 which is funded for some of our families.

We have a 'Kiss and drop' system first thing in the morning to help parents who don't have time to park. Staff operating this are very welcoming to ensure that our children have as positive a start to the school day as possible.

Attendance figures are reported to parents three times a year in our termly reports. Opportunities to discuss this are given in school, although where it is low we would have addressed it earlier with the family.

The office sends an email each day to all staff with a list of the children who are off school and the reason given for the absence. This helps us all work together to see any patterns and allows the leadership team to be in the loop even if not on site.

We have standard processes, letters etc to support good attendance but also do lots of bespoke things to support families.

The newsletter keeps parents updated about our policy and gives regular reminders about the importance of children being in school and being on time.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- We are a relatively small school and so aim to offer bespoke support to all of the families who need it, although in the case of child protection and children in need pupils we would involve outside agencies at an earlier point.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Attendance is in line with or above the national average.
- Persistent absence is relatively low.
- Families feel supported and have responded very positively to parent surveys.

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Review of attendance policy. Joint work with the neighbouring infant school to ensure consistency in approach for all children.
- Attendance is monitored for all children twice each half-term to ensure that any patterns in attendance are monitored and actions taken accordingly, with key groups of children, including PPG, CP and PLAC children monitored closely.
- Early conversations held with parents and carers to discuss strategies to support attendance, for example, access to breakfast club, key adult to meet child upon arrival.
- Further meetings with other professional agencies as required to help implement additional strategies.
- Attendance for the whole school celebrated in the weekly newsletter with the class with the highest attendance announced.
- Regular reminders in the newsletter of the importance of good attendance on attainment.
- When families join the school, part of the meeting about joining the school focuses on the importance of good attendance.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- A key adult being there for them to talk to them at a time that has been discussed with them to most benefit them. For two pupils this is the first thing on a Monday morning, for another this is shorter daily check ins first thing each morning.
- Access to breakfast club and after school club if required to help support the needs of the family. The cost of this will be funded by the school if required.
- Key roles for them to do first thing in the morning, such as feeding the guinea pigs, so that we need them to be in school.
- A key adult being at the front of the school to meet them as they leave their parent or carer and a softer transition into the start of the day.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- One child in need now has an attendance of 95.6%. At the end of December 2022 his attendance was 91.9% He went on a children in need plan in January 2022.
- One child is about to have an ICPC and current attendance is 85.4%. This is a family we are working closely with and this child has a one-to-one adult at school for daily check-ins. This has had a massive impact on her attendance. Before the end of December, she was having a lot of time off when her parents were separating and her attendance was 79.4%.
- One child in need unfortunately is now refusing to come to school and is having home tuition. We are in regular contact with a range of professionals to support this child and their family.
- We also have two children who have social care involved with the family due to older siblings and their SEND needs. Although these children are no longer on a children in need plan, we ensure that we put in additional provision. One child has a school funded place at breakfast and after school club. Her attendance is 92.6% and another has Monday morning check-ins with an ELSA. His attendance is 90.2%.



# Corpus Christi Catholic Primary School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Letters sent home termly if attendance has fallen below 90%.
- Regular notice of impact of absence put in weekly newsletter and shared with parents at annual open evening.
- Telephone call from office staff if family have not notified absence by 10am at the latest.
- Visits made to home by the headteacher and senior leadership team if no contact before midday.
- Parents must log children in on InVentry at the office if they are late.
- Termly letter sent home if regular lateness.
- General conversations with parents at the gate in the morning - is there anything we can do to support the family?
- 100% certificates for classes in weekly assembly.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Accessing the above school wide strategies plus:
- Support from education wellbeing practitioner from the mental health support team which provides courses for parents on managing anxiety in their children.
- Regular meetings with parents.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Whole school attendance remains very stable at approximately 96% over the past two years.
- Persistent absence improved from 11.6% to 9.5% following letters at the end of the autumn term to the end of the spring term. Twelve classes out of 15 saw a drop in persistent absence.

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Reduced timetables for our education, health and care plan students.
- Parent workshops - support learning in school and individual parents cooking how to eat a healthy diet.
- Parents seeing a school nurse when needed for reassurance 'if your child is ill, we will ring you'.
- Individual meetings with children and parents, but 162 children on roll.
- Regular meetings with education welfare officer and Virtual School promote the idea that being in school is safer and managing parent anxiety .
- Staff do ring when a child not in - not possible everyday - we are looking at a long term plan.
- Leading Partnership Award - parental Award - coffee mornings and engagement is high.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Transport to ensure children get to school on time.
- Parental Engagement - PowerPoint to share school plan..
- School nurse is available for parents - share concerns.
- Target parents for coffee mornings.
- Building strong relationships with parents and staff.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- We have access to four school vehicles now and staff can pick them up and now they can be on school on time and this is important to us about inclusion.
- Having good relationships to transport staff.
- We provide an exciting curriculum and we have a swimming pool - having an interesting lively engaging curriculum.
- Sensory circuits - start of the day offsite learning and educational learning work in the community - life skills.
- Practical and hands on learning.
- Theatre trips - Shakespeare workshops.
- Wimbledon Theatre.
- Trips to shops - students learning real life.

# East Sheen Primary School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Parent coffee mornings, led by the Mental Health Support team and senior leaders. This came out of parental mental health and anxiety being a big barrier in our school to attendance for some pupils.
- ERSA training for three staff members and use of strategies in the toolkit to target appropriate support, including access to ELSA sessions where anxiety was a barrier to attendance.
- Celebrating attendance publicly (shared in newsletters, assemblies, class stars and Paddington Bear is given out for classes with 100% attendance).
- Clear policy with different stages and communications at each stage. All within a culture of supporting families
- Service level agreement with education welfare officer who supports with tracking, parent meetings and, where needed, legal attendance meetings.
- Monitoring punctuality and meeting with parents to offer breakfast club support to improve punctuality.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Access to the above strategies.
- Funded breakfast club and after school club places.
- Free access to catch-up interventions before school led by school staff.
- Staff collecting two children from home in the morning.
- Transport arranged for some of these students through relevant local authority offers.
- Engagement with the Attachment Aware Schools Award, and development of therapeutic spaces, and time and training to effectively use emotion coaching to support our most vulnerable children.
- Access to pastoral support through the SEMH specialist provision in school, or engagement with therapists from the Mental Health Support team.
- Reward charts and systems, in partnership with children and families.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Pupil attendance and persistent absenteeism is generally positive and parents understand their responsibilities and the processes involved.
- PPG and education, health and care plan groups consistently show higher rates of absence and persistent absenteeism, so it remains a priority on our PPG strategy and in SEN review meetings, looking at the individuals' barriers to attendance skills.
- Residential trips - Boxhill and Butlins.
- Absence and persistent absenteeism for whole school and groups is better than national averages and has improved from 2019 levels.
- Attendance officer training through AfC has supported the effective management of attendance and the focus on ERSA and emotional support means families are supported to improve attendance.

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Termly prize draw for 100% attendance ( with caveat of including those with absence beyond their control).
- School liaison officer - students not in school rings daily and visits home.
- All staff have letters regarding absence and consistently send home for each session and lesson missed.
- Half termly tutorial session where tutors speak to students regarding attendance.
- Attendance lead speaks to parents at Year 7 induction evening regarding attendance.
- Increasing visuals around school; updating website, leaflet which will be at all future parents information evenings. Banners being designed for around site regarding attendance.
- Parent support worker works with parents who are finding it hard to support their child in attending school. She can undertake home visits, undertake ERSA toolkit with students and work one-to-one with students with poor attendance.
- Challenge parents who want to take holidays or dentist appointments .
- Text messages to families with low attendance before the start of term reminding them when term restarts.
- Attendance tutorials.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Accessing the above school wide strategies plus:
  - under took the attachment aware schools award
  - wide range of interventions on site
  - use of school counsellors to support via in person and phone appointments

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Sustained whole school attendance at or above national and local figures.

# Grand Avenue Primary and Nursery School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Our expectations regarding attendance are made clear to parents on admission to school and are included in our Home School Partnership agreement.
- Attendance is very closely monitored. Any child with an attendance rate of lower than 90% is added to a register. The register is updated every half term.
- Step 1 - A child causing concern: initially a phone call is made home to clarify the reasons for low attendance and to offer support. EG, If ERSA then support is offered in school. If continuing illness, a discussion about diet, sleep, etc.
- Step 2 - If attendance is still a concern a further phone call is made, followed up with a letter. Letter is copied to education welfare officer. Parents are advised that the school will only authorise absence due to illness if there is medical evidence provided. Support also offered such as ELSA.
- Step 3 - If attendance continues to be a concern a meeting is held with parents. The child's attendance report is shared and a leaflet outlining the impact low attendance can have on future life chances (created by school). Discussion focuses on attainment and relationships.
- Step 4 - Children with continued low attendance, a SPA referral is made. Support requested from an education welfare officer.
- If a child is absent from school and no reason is forthcoming, the family is contacted by the office staff on the day of absence.
- Families wishing to take a holiday in term time need to complete an application form. These requests are usually recorded as unauthorised. Families asking repeatedly for holidays in term time are invited into school for an attendance meeting.
- Children with 100% attendance are recognised in a special assembly and rewarded with a medal at the end of each term.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for Children in Need and Children with a Child Protection Plan?**

- As above, plus regular involvement with the inclusion manager.
- Good relationships are fostered, engaging families with school. Support is offered, such as different ways of communicating, liaising with the SEND team in Achieving for Children for aspects such as transport.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Parents are more aware of the impact low attendance can have on their child in terms of attainment and friendships.
- One family with a child protection plan (now children in need) attendance improved due to CSC involvement and school support.

## Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?

- Attendance check-in calls before the start of the academic year on school INSET days for key students.
- Attendance expectations highlighted in Information evenings at the start of the school year.
- School FSW tracks daily and weekly attendance with a focus on key students.
- Use of data to identify concerns and note improvements.
- Use of attendance weekly tracker and persistent absence identification spreadsheet to identify persistently absent students and a 'WHAT IF' calculator to show students the impact of specific numbers of days off.
- Calls home and regular home visits to support attendance and welfare checks.
- One to one support for students and ERSA work as needed in school or at home.
- Short term use of the student support centre as a measure to encourage students to be in school even if unable to attend lessons.
- Attendance officer makes calls after two days of absence - welfare check.
- Weekly attendance update in e-bulletin to celebrate top tutor and year group and promote expectations.
- Termly attendance and behaviour updates sent to all parents across Years 7 to 11.
- Use of academic tutoring day to discuss attendance and set targets.
- 2023/24 - FSW will be available at all parents' evenings to discuss attendance and target key students.
- Attendance officer regularly updates the attendance noticeboard.
- Attendance focus weeks across the school involving tutors and tutees - focused activities and conversations.
- 100% and zero lates football competition - students were allowed to watch the first England World Cup game in the afternoon as a reward.
- 100 Club attendance reward film afternoon in summer term.
- Gold group attendance focus - 40 disadvantaged students selected and monitored over course of academic year, one-to-one and group support, regular parental contact, half termly letters to celebrate improvements, end of term rewards and treats including pizza and ice cream afternoon for high or improved attendance.
- FSW presents at Year 6 transition evening in July to welcome new parents, set expectations and introduce their role so parents are aware of who to reach out to if there are concerns.
- Presentation evening on 'Attendance -the teenage brain' .
- FSW attends SEN Year 6 tea party to discuss her role and support for families.
- Letters sent out to parents of students in Year 6 who have been identified as having issues with attendance - welcome letter yet sets expectations.
- Discussion with and challenge parents who take students out of school for term time holidays.
- Follow letter 1, 2, 3 attendance process, and student and parent meetings.

- Referral for legal process as per the policy when all avenues of support are exhausted.
- Use of EISS to support with attendance - use consultation service initially and alternative provision where necessary.
- FSW and student support officers meet weekly to discuss attendance and speak to students or call home.
- FSW meets SENCo weekly to see how SEN students can be supported by key workers to maintain good attendance.
- Use SLT support with mentoring key disadvantaged students.
- SLT phone calls home to support key students of concern.
- Close collaboration with external agencies as appropriate.
- Attendance is a regular focus of pastoral weekly meetings with FSW presenting regular updates and sharing impact with staff (head of year, phase leaders, SLT)

### **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- All of the above strategies plus:
  - One-to-one daily or weekly FSW or SSO support for children in need or child protection students as needed.
  - School facilitates meeting with social workers, family support, external agencies in school to ensure attendance remains a key focus.
  - All Social workers emailed immediately if students are absent.
  - School attendance at all children in need and core group meetings or CP conferences.
  - Regular challenge at children in need or core group meetings to ensure attendance remains a priority alongside other issues.
  - Close working with the Virtual School for CIN and CP students - half termly meetings with the FSW to discuss attendance and strategies to support.
  - Participation in virtual pilot mentoring project to support young people on a CIN or CP plan.
  - Offers of tutoring for some key stage 4 students.

### **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Whole school attendance is above the DfE published national data on 1 June (94.3% vs 90.9%) and above the Richmond schools (91.9%).
- Autumn to May half term attendance was 93.7 % in May 2022 - improved to 94.3% May 2023.
- Persistent absenteeism has dropped from 17.1% in May 2022 to 12.36% in May 2023. 27% of current persistent absentees can still move out of this group by the end of the academic year.
- The % of PA in disadvantaged students has been reduced by 11.3% over the last 12 months.
- 46% of students in the Gold Group have maintained attendance over 96% or improved their attendance over the last eight months.
- One student in the Gold Group has improved from 29% to 80%.
- 15% of persistent absence students in the Gold Group have moved out of being PA.

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Developing accessibility for all learners.
- Three wave attendance process (Teacher > Phase Leader > SLT).
- Daily response for absence.
- Fortnightly in-depth analysis of attendance and persistently absent children.
- Attendance awards for persistently absent children under 90% Specific focus on context of children (PPG and SEN, given the context of the school) .
- Celebrating attendance with school community through newsletter – ‘class of the week’.
- Signage around school and in newsletter - showing impact of missed learning or reduced attendance).
- Half-termly education welfare officer visits.
- Home visits when contact not made over five days.
- Removing barriers to non-attendance (Brite box recipes, second hand uniform).

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Anxiety workshops
- Transition workshops for both children and parents.
- Case study approach (child protection or children in need) – bespoke learning opportunities and support for attendance.
- Pastoral support systems in place for children in need children.
- Reasonable adjustments and part-time timetables for complex needs children.
- Attachment Aware Aware for SEMH and children with ACEs.
- Soft start activities for SBA children .

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Current whole school attendance vs last year.
- Current PPG attendance versus last year .
- Significant increases in attendance – (SEN/SRP).
- Number of persistently absent - currently.



## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Head of Wellbeing and Safeguarding reviews attendance every week for students who have attendance below 90%. Where there is a drop of attendance for two consecutive weeks (and there is not an approved reason for this) and attendance review meeting is arranged and an attendance plan put in place.
- HLTA for Attendance and Wellbeing is in post to support parents in improving their routines and helping them address any barriers that might be preventing their child from having at least 90% attendance.
- We financially support some parents via our bursary funding to help part fund their child's place on school transport.
- We have termly meetings with our allocated education welfare officer and also source specific advice from them as and when required.
- In the weekly newsletter in terms 1, 3 and 5, parents are sent an awareness of attendance and a reminder for booking holidays in term time which we are now taking a much stricter stance on.
- Attendance section during 'meet the team' transition days in July to raise awareness and promote better attendance.
- Specific staff have had ERSA training which is being implemented for those who have the lowest attendance and are emotional refusers.
- Ensure that for any children that are open to social care and have attendance below 90%, this concern is added to their social care plan.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Accessing the above school wide strategies.
- Whole school nurture with every class a 'safe base'.
- Achieved the Attachment Aware Schools Award and Nurturing School Award.
- Established an onsite alternative provision offering parallel curriculum and nurture.
- Targeted emotional therapies where required.
- Certificates and house points award to students with high levels of attendance.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- 52 students now have an attendance plan in place.
- Better attendance for some students.
- So far this academic year, the number of students with attendance below 90% is reducing week-on-week.

# Meadlands Primary School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Weekly attendance trophy for the class with the highest attendance that week. This is announced in assembly along with second and third place. A photo of the winning class and trophy is taken and added to Twitter.
- In our weekly newsletter we list the attendance of each class and rank this in order from highest to lowest.
- At the end of each half-term we do a raffle with the names of anyone who has got 100%. 1 child's name is selected in a special assembly, they then get to pick a watch online and is ordered for them to wear. It has to be an analogue watch.
- For children who struggle with punctuality we have punctuality reward charts that the teachers fill in monitoring how many times in a week they have arrived on time.
- Where we know that children struggle coming in, we give them special jobs to complete that must be done at the start of the day such as – taking something to the office.
- In classes there is an attendance poster, which details that classes' weekly attendance, their highest ever attendance and how many times they have won the trophy.
- Attendance letters are sent out to anyone who drops below 90%. These are done in a collaborative way to work with parents and support them.
- Attendance is reviewed weekly with any child who has fallen below 90% being reviewed to ensure that it is improving.
- Attendance is shared with parents each term and if there is a concern during parents evenings.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- If these children are not in they are the first to receive a welfare call.
- These children have been offered Breakfast Club spaces.
- Where parents have struggled to get children in, we have supported them by either speaking to the children on their phone, or have physically gone to the house and collected the children.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Our whole school attendance is above the national average baseline and the progress of our attendance and persistent absence percentage can be seen in the table below. Our current persistent absence is at 24, so has dropped by a further seven children since the spring term.

# Richmond Park Academy

## Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?

- Daily phone calls made to absentees.
- Clear attendance policy with step by step escalation process explained.
- SOL tracker weekly meetings with head of years to pinpoint specific students with a declining attendance (based off of trends).
- Clear rewards process given to students with improving attendance, not just 100%.
- Effective use of education welfare officer to target persistent absence students who are exceptionally tough to reach and borough processes are needed.
- Attendance clinics held for persistent absence students and parents to look at support that can be implemented.
- Reduced TT offered to students with extenuating circumstances.
- Access to the school counsellor.
- Referral system to the educational psychologist.
- Mentoring system offered.

## What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?

- Follow up phone calls and emails to vulnerable students for all absences.
- Attendance concerns addressed on risk assessments.
- Reporting absence to social workers and professional network.
- Reserved spaces for termly reward trips and cultural capital events.

## As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...

- Maintained a higher than national average attendance .
- A reduction in persistent absence.
- Raised profile within school about attendance and rewards processes.
- More efficiency around supporting persistently absent students.

Pupil absence, suspensions and permanent exclusions		
Absence	Overall absence rate	Percentage of permanent absentees
2021 to 2022	6.53%	11.7%
Autumn term	6.56% without nursery 6.52% with nursery	20%
Spring term	3.97% without nursery 4.16% with nursery	13%

# Riverside Primary School (RBWM)

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Monitoring of all children's attendance.
- Phone calls home to parents of children causing concern.
- Attendance award in assembly each week to class with the highest attendance.
- Attendance figures given to parents each parents' evening (three times a year) and on end of year reports with a grading.
- Invite education welfare officer to parents' evening.
- education welfare officer involvement with cases causing significant concern.
- Nurture base with ELSA and nurture trained staff to support children who struggle to separate from carers.
- Early help referral or MASH referrals where appropriate.
- Key staff on the gates in the morning.
- School has achieved Attachment Aware Award and Inclusion Quality Mark in the last year
- Updated behaviour regulation policy based on relational approaches.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- We report on absence at each core group or children in need meeting and challenge parents or carers if attendance is not good enough.
- We let social workers know if there is absence without contact from parent.
- Additional nurture support for children where needed.
- Lead professional attached to each child protection or children in need family who has regular contact with the family.
- Increased support from education welfare officer. This has sometimes included pick ups from the child's home.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Family of three children who were at child protection and are now at children in need, one of whom was struggling with ERSA: attendance has improved significantly (Child 1: attendance now 92.6% up 17% since this time last year, Child 2: attendance 97.4%, up 13% from this time last year, Child 3: attendance 90%, up 39% from last year).
- Family of two children on long term child protection plan. Child 1: attendance 86%, up 6% since last year. Child 2: attendance 88%, up 11% since last year. Parent now brings Child 2 in when child 1 is ill, whereas previously she would have kept them both off (Child 1: experiences quite a lot of illness).

# St Mary's CE Primary School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- School attendance officer in place but as we are over three sites, each admin team takes responsibility for contacting parents and refer to the headteacher or attendance officer as appropriate.
- We buy into the EWS service Bronze level: headteacher or attendance officer meet with our education welfare officer every three weeks.
- The attendance officer creates and updates a spreadsheet which is available or shared with the administration team, SLT and other relevant staff.
- Education welfare officer arranges 'attendance meetings' with parents as appropriate; headteacher also in attendance.
- Education welfare officer calls or arranges to meet parents with persistent absence and/or persistent lateness.
- We share an attendance table with parents in our weekly newsletter and regularly remind parents of attendance expectations in our newsletters. When new pupils join the school, our attendance policy is shared with them and our home school agreement reflects our expectations which parents sign.
- Holidays are not authorised and if the absence is 10 sessions or longer, a fixed penalty notice is issued via the local authority.
- Teachers are encouraged to give out certificates to pupils who are persistently late. We no longer send out 100% attendance certificates as the EWO believes they are counter productive and potentially unfair.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Accessing the above school wide strategies plus:
- SENCo will follow up via phone or a meeting re persistent absence and offer strategies/ support.
- Admin staff immediately alert SENCo and headteacher or deputy headteacher when there's persistent absence or any worries.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Whole school attendance has improved since employing the services of the EWS.

# St Joseph's Catholic Primary School

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance? to raise attendance?**

- Termly 100% certificates.
- Attendance officer contacts home daily when a pupil is not in school and family has not shared details of absence. Escalation to SLT if unsure.
- Attendance shared on newsletter and website.
- Regular meetings between the attendance officer and SLT to discuss.
- Letters sent home – 90 to 92%, below 90% and education welfare officer involvement.
- Involvement from our wellbeing lead – helps to remove barriers to attendance and working with further support from Achieving for Children.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Close monitoring.
- Communication between the attendance officer and SLT/DSL.
- Communication between social workers when children are absent.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Better communications and relationships with our parents and carers.
- Families respond positively to meetings or letters and this tends to show itself in the child's attendance figures.

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance?**

- Whole school weekly attendance trophy for the class with the best attendance the week before.
- Monitoring of children falling below 95% to look for reasons. Letters home if absence is sporadic.
- Letters home if attendance is at 90% or lower.
- Education welfare officer involvement if persistent absence
- Constant email and face-to-face contact with flagging families.
- Reminders to families about term time holidays and planning exciting events at the end of term to prevent some families from booking holidays.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- At the moment, we don't have any our most recent had good attendance.

# Tolworth Girls' School & Sixth Form

## **Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance**

- Termly 100%, 95% and improvement certificates.
- School Attendance officer, rings or texts home when students are not in school.
- School attendance officer and heads of year send letters home to parents.
- School attendance officer attends all Year group parents evenings.
- school attendance officer will follow up when a student does not attend the lesson – for example, search school, call home.
- School attendance officer meets weekly with heads of year.
- School attendance officer liaises with senco, dsl, mental health lead and senior staff members.
- Powerpoint provided to all parents on first day of academic year to remind them the impact .
- Attendance assemblies.
- Every tutor group and every year group have weekly celebrations of attendance success.
- Daily morning duty to tackle lateness.
- 90% Attendance support groups with assistant heads of years.
- External agency support.
- In house high needs attendance panel.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- Parent and pupil meetings.
- School attendance officer has daily communication with school DSL.
- Open communication with attendance officer, DSL and social care.
- One-to-one meetings with student.
- Support external visitors to have sessions with students in school to avoid non-attendance to school.
- Offer careers sessions.
- Referral to external services to support engagement in school.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- Since DSL and attendance officer are placed closed together in school and regular meetings school attendance has increased from 92% to 94.9%.
- Year 10 student attendance was 30%, now 54.3% after using the above strategies.
- Year 10 student attendance improved significantly when referred to an alternative provision one day a week.



## Achievements: Please outline your whole school strategies to raise attendance

- We have developed an action plan based on the four principles of leadership, relationships and communication, systems and data, and interventions.
- Within the leadership strand, we have ensured leaders at all levels are communicating the importance of attendance to all stakeholders. This has come through using our key communication tools, such as the parent newsletter, assemblies, and through tutor time activities. We have ensured a sustained and relentless focus across the course of the year.
- We have placed a significant focus on staff training and CPDL, ensuring that time is spent supporting staff in developing the skills to perform their roles, but also that they have 'heat experiences' to demonstrate their knowledge.
- We have ensured a clear role for our safeguarding governor link, ensuring they are kept up to date with attendance communications.
- Within the field of relationships, we have placed the greatest significance of the role of the form tutor, using our 'key adult' model. Tutors have received training and support across the course of the year in delivering attendance interventions that deliver impact. The efficacy of these are reviewed across the course of the year with good practice shared internally and built upon.
- Furthermore, attendance concerns now form a key strand of our inclusion meetings (which brings together pastoral, safeguarding and SEND leaders). Where there is an attendance related concern, we collaborate as a team to ensure the right people are best supporting each child (whether through mental health support, SEND support or behaviour support).
- Within the strand of systems and data, we have robust procedures in place to ensure effective data tracking on a daily, fortnightly and half-termly basis.
- On a daily basis, pupils who are already attendance concerns are immediately flagged to the wider pastoral team to ensure relevant follow-up can be actioned in a timely manner. This can include additional phone calls, home visits or liaison with external agencies where relevant.
- On a fortnightly basis, whole school attendance is tracked. This enables pupils with positive or improved attendance to be rewarded. However, it also enables dips in attendance to be immediately flagged. Pupils with attendance below 95% are added to an 'at risk list', triggering communication with parents and also check-ins with the form tutor. These check-ins are supervised by the head of key stage of compliance and effectiveness. When a child dips below PA, the matter is escalated to the pastoral team who call a formal meeting with parents and seek to instigate a bespoke approach to rapidly improve attendance.
- On a half-term basis, we conduct a trend analysis with attendance. We are particularly keen to identify success stories and areas of concern within vulnerable groups within and between year groups. We also actively compare with the previous year, but also with the last year prior to COVID interruptions. In addition to the data analysis, we conduct a deep dive with a chosen target group (eg, Year 6 autistic spectrum disorder pupils) to better understand the reasons for their poor attendance and develop organisational learnings.

- Within the final strand, interventions, we have placed an emphasis this year on working more effectively with a wider range of external partners to deepen the interventions we can offer. This has involved much earlier sign-posting to early help services where we identify an underlying need impacting on attendance. We have also been proactive in engaging our mental health support worker and commissioned counsellor. We have also had an increase in the number of education, health and care plan applications being made where attendance has pointed to an underlying but significant SEND need. We have also ensured that attendance concerns are better integrated in how we assign internal social and emotional interventions, with bespoke SEL interventions taking place where improving attendance has been a key target.

## **What are the specific strategies you use to reduce absence for children in need and children with a child protection plan?**

- The daily circulation of absences to the wider pastoral team means that our pastoral manager can immediately flag any unknown absences of pupils on children in need or child protection with relevant external agencies, such as with the social worker or support worker.
- Our weekly inclusion meetings bring together safeguarding concerns with attendance concerns (alongside other issues, such as SEND). This ensures a coordinated and integrated approach is taken with regard to these pupils. For example, we might put in place a wellbeing intervention, but include an explicit focus around positive attendance within this.
- We have improved our information sharing of wellbeing context, including those on children in need or child protection plans in so far as is appropriate, with form tutors. This means that attendance check-ins are better informed with a wider picture and context of the child. Where attendance check-ins have been consistent, meaningful impact has been identified.
- In a small group of cases where poor attendance has been persistent with vulnerable pupils, bespoke plans and incentives have been put in place. These have involved soft-starts, morning check-ins and bespoke rewards.
- Our formal attendance concern meetings ensures parental engagement. These have proved useful in identifying deeper concerns at play within a child's life. These have led to a raft of bespoke interventions, sometimes engaging internal staff and sometimes external agencies.

## **As a result of our absence reduction strategies we have noticed the following outcomes...**

- At the time of writing, persistent absence is sitting at 13.7%. This sits significantly below the national figure of 22%.
- At the time of writing, our attendance average is 94.51%, which sits two percentage points above the national average.
- Attendance for PP and SEND pupils has improved since this time last year.
- Year 5 and Year 7 attendance remains above good (95%), which has been sustained across the course of the year.
- Year 5 attendance has been a particular strength, a testimony to the new strategy as this year group have only been at Trevelyan since the launch of our new strategy.
- Eight out of 9 pupils who are (or have been) on a children in need and child protection plan have attendance above 90%.

- Five out of these 9 pupils have attendance above 97%.
- The one pupil of the nine currently persistently absent, has made substantial progress over the course of the year following intervention. He has attended all but one day across the summer term.

