MOMENTS MATTER, ATTENDANCE COUNTS.

Attendance communications toolkit for local authority attendance teams and other stakeholders

March 2024 update

Department for Education

Contents

Updated!

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Toolkit for supporting attendance comms

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Improving school attendance is everyone's business and, to tackle the challenge we face, we need to work together. In **January**, Government launched a national campaign to encourage parents to send their children to school when they can, acknowledging that it can be confusing and signpost to sources of support.

The purpose of this toolkit is to provide local authorities and other stakeholders with off-the-shelf products they can use to support the campaign and create a national moment around attendance.

The campaign strapline is ***"moments matter, attendance counts"***. Messaging for the communications have been developed from research into parental attitudes, as well as two local authority pilots at the end of 2023.

Campaign messages aim to primarily reach those parents and carers whose children are taking preventable odd days of absence – or "avoidable absence" – rather than children who face greater barriers to attendance, such as those with long term medical needs or special educational needs and disabilities.

We hope that you will support the campaign by promoting your own messages to schools, services and parents and carers in your area.

Our campaign aims to:

- Continue to support schools and local authorities in navigating attendance challenges.

- Amplify the notion that every day of school is important, reminding families **moments matter, attendance counts.**

- Reassure parents that the NHS and the Chief Medical Officer say it is usually appropriate for parents and carers to send their children to school with mild respiratory illnesses, including general cold symptoms like a minor cough, runny nose or sore throat.

- Encourage you to participate in the campaign to help us amplify messages to families and schools.

What's happening

The campaign **seeks to influence parents and carers'** views on the importance of school attendance.

To promote the importance of school attendance and the value of a school day, the national communications campaign will include:

- Promoted social media advertising
- Media partnerships
- Radio advertising
- Expert-led activity
- Out of home advertising
- Promoted online video – YouTube

When?

Campaign activity began in January and finishes at the end of March 2024. This toolkit and the resources it links to will remain live after the campaign ends and you are encouraged to continue to make use of the materials provided.

The campaign reflects feedback from schools and local authorities. It forms one part of our wider strategy to increase attendance, which also includes clearer expectations for schools and local authorities built around a 'support first' approach.

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6 ways you can support the campaign & attendance comms

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Everyone can:

1. Mobilise the schools, wider services and staff in your area or network to support this campaign and consider how they have good conversations with the children and young people they support on attendance. The communicating with families to support attendance toolkit will help to maximise your impact.

2. Work with your communication teams to create a national warm welcome for families throughout the spring by sharing the attendance campaign resources (**on slide 6**) on your social media channels, newsletters, website and places families frequent (e.g. libraries and family hubs). You can tailor these to your area and print the resources.

3. Continue to support children and young people struggling to attend school as much as possible throughout Spring term by taking a "support first" approach and sustaining efforts to engage them when referred by schools. We have produced a range of webinars and case studies with tips and best practice to address attendance barriers.

LA attendance teams can also:

4. Restate expectations of schools, in line with the Working together to improve school attendance guidance (e.g., having a clear school attendance policy and building strong relationships with families). Be clear on what you will do for them in return (e.g., convene a formal conversation with families where engagement or support is proving challenging and hold termly targeted support meetings).

5. Make use of the daily attendance data to take stock of the year so far and identify and respond to trends.

6. When sharing campaign materials, signpost to where families experiencing more complex barriers to attendance can access local services, such as family hubs or local attendance, inclusion and welfare teams.

Attendance campaign resources to use

We have updated the social media graphics to feature new animated creative assets on illness and shared connections at school. They are downloadable here and include:

- Images you can print out, including a new printable poster (see examples below)
- Social media graphics you can post – including four videos
- A 'Moments Matter, Attendance Counts' logo you can add to your e-mail signature

You can also share our promoted online videos, such as this one from Dr Radha Modgil

We encourage you to share the latest graphics on your social media channels. Suggested post:

"From the first day of term to the last, the small moments in a school day make a real difference to your child. #AttendanceCounts"

Campaign colour palette

When using the campaign resources, use our colours for maximum impact.

Our colours
Our bright colour palette seeks to create a visual language that amplifies the excitement and positivity associated with school life.

For assets, we use a monochromatic colour scheme using a bright primary colour with a complimentary softer tone.

Our campaign colours adhere to AA accessibility standards. Only use the matching light and dark colours combinations. Do not mix and match colours.

Our fonts are Poster Cut Neue and Century Gothic Pro. We use Poster Cut Neue in Uppercase for our headlines and Century Gothic Pro Bold Sentence case for our body copy. The font Grandstander can be used as an alternative headline free google font.

C:78 M:37 Y:0 K:0 R:0 G:99 B:234 HEX: #0063EA	C:78 M:0 Y:98 K:0 R:1 G:173 B:27 HEX: #01AD1B	C:0 M:80 Y:1 K:0 R:248 G:82 B:194 HEX: #F852C2	C:0 M:76 Y:100 K:0 R:255 G:97 B:0 HEX: #FF6100	C:0 M:91 Y:87 K:0 R:255 G:70 B:55 HEX: #FF4637	C:83 M:79 Y:0 K:0 R:80 G:4 B:245 HEX: #5004F5
C:27 M:0 Y:1 K:0 R:187 G:230 B:249 HEX: #BBE6F9	C:12 M:0 Y:28 K:0 R:204 G:253 B:212 HEX: #CCFDD4	C:0 M:25 Y:0 K:0 R:255 G:217 B:247 HEX: #FFD9F7	C:0 M:31 Y:52 K:0 R:255 G:196 B:149 HEX: #FFC495	C:0 M:27 Y:19 K:0 R:251 G:201 B:199 HEX: #FBC9C7	C:15 M:22 Y:0 K:0 R:214 G:197 B:249 HEX: #D6C5F9

Attendance: the top facts to know & share

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The link between attendance and attainment is clear:

- In 2018/19, **just 40% of persistently absent (PA) children in KS2 achieved expected KS2 standards,** compared with 84% of pupils who regularly attended school.

- **36% of PA children in KS4 got 9 to 4 in their English and maths GCSEs,** compared with 84% of regular attenders.[1]

And it's never too late to benefit from good attendance:

- **More than half (54%)** of pupils who were **PA in Year 10 and then rarely absent in Year 11, passed at least 5 GCSEs,** compared to 36% of pupils who were persistently absent in both years.[2]

But attendance is important for more than just attainment:

- Regular school attendance can facilitate **positive peer relationships,** which is a **protective factor for mental health and wellbeing.**[3]

Attendance in the first week of school in September sets up attendance throughout the year (and it's time to start preparing for back to school now):

- Evidence from a Children's Commissioner report showed that children who miss one of the first few days of the new term for unauthorised reasons are much more likely to miss long periods of their schooling than their peers who attended those first few days. These children had a predicted overall absence of almost 45%, or 31 days across the term. [4]

- In the 2022/23 academic year, of those who had at least one day of absence in the first week of term, 55.5% went on to be persistently absent.[5]

1: The link between absence and attainment at KS2 and KS4, Academic year 2018/19 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)
2: Missing Children, Missing Grades | Children's Commissioner for England (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
3: Mental Health and Attendance at School (Chapter 1) - Mental Health and Attendance at School (cambridge.org)
4: Let's get ready for September | Children's Commissioner for England (childrenscommissioner.gov.uk)
5: Pupil attendance in schools, Week 8 2024 – Explore education statistics – GOV.UK (explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk)

Coming up next term…

As announced on February 29 2024, we have introduced:

- Updated working together to improve school attendance guidance, setting out how schools and local authorities (LAs) must take a 'support first' approach to help pupils and their families to tackle barriers to attendance, which will be made statutory from August 2024. The guidance particularly emphasises the importance of support for pupils with SEND and mental ill health who often need more individual consideration due to wider barriers.

- A new National Framework for Penalty Notices sets a single national threshold to improve consistency and embed a 'support first' approach by ensuring penalty notices are only considered where support is not engaged with, not working or not appropriate.

- Regulations to mandate attendance data-sharing by all state-funded schools, giving schools and LAs access to near-live high-quality data to inform target support early. 89% schools are already sharing their data with us. You can sign up to share your daily school attendance data here.

- Regulations to modernise school attendance and admission registers, to improve consistency and accuracy of register recordings.

To support schools and LAs to embed these changes, the Department for Education will be running a series of training sessions and webinars from April 2024. Details of these will be shared with settings via the Sector Email – which you can sign up to receive here!

Additionally, over the course of the summer term we will be releasing more data tools and resources designed to support schools to tackle absence.

Further resources

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Guidance
- Working together to improve school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- School behaviour and attendance: parental responsibility measures - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Is my child too ill for school?- NHS (www.nhs.uk)
- Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools- GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Letter to school leaders on mild illness and school attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Supporting pupils with medical conditions at school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Education for children with health needs who cannot attend school - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)

Resources
- How to improve your child's school attendance and where to get support - The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)
- Access your school attendance data - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- Mental health resources for children, students, parents, carers and school/college staff- The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)

Best practice
- Improving attendance: good practice for schools and multi-academy trusts - Case study - GOV.UK (wwww.gov.uk)
- Attendance - Teaching (blog.gov.uk)
- Attendance hubs-GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
- What are reasonable adjustments and how do they help disabled pupils at school? - The Education Hub (blog.gov.uk)