



Middlesbrough Attendance Strategy 2024-2027

October 2023



Foreword

This strategy sets out our commitment to help parents and carers ensure their children attend school. We want to do this by working in partnership with all those who are able to support children and families.

When there are specific problems with attendance the local authority and schools will work closely to support families and children. We will take a carefully managed approach and seek to understand, encourage and support children and young people to attend school every day.

We have high aspirations for the children and young people of Middlesbrough – we want them to enjoy life and achieve well, to thrive as part of a strong and inclusive community and economy. Good attendance at school is vital if they are to realise this ambition and reach their full potential.

This strategy seeks to strengthen partnership arrangements so that all children attend school every day and reach their potential.

Middlesbrough's Attendance Pledge

Attendance matters!

We commit to:

- Work together to improve attendance across the town
- Be champions of good attendance
- Help families to help their children develop good attendance habits
- Celebrate improved attendance
- Reduce disruption to learning when children can't attend
- Remove barriers to attendance whenever we find them
- Make sure support is available to help children improve their attendance

Introduction

Why is regular attendance at school important? Evidence shows that securing excellent attendance at school is key to ensuring positive outcomes for children and young people, and is an essential part of keeping them safe. Missing lessons results in students falling behind, creating gaps in their learning, and reducing their self-confidence.

Good attendance habits must start from the earliest stages of education. We know that children who regularly miss school in Reception class are more likely to go on to have poor attendance at secondary school. Children with poor attendance are 5 times less likely to achieve 5 good passes at GCSE, making it harder for them to go on to Higher Education or into employment.

We also know that poor attendance at school can lead to poor emotional health and wellbeing. Children and young people who miss school on a regular basis can become socially isolated; they can lack confidence and have low self-esteem. Children can feel like they don't fit in with their peers and this can lead to loneliness. We also know that young people who regularly miss school are at greater risk of anti-social behaviour and are more likely to become victims of crime.

These are not the life outcomes and experiences we want for our children. School is not just about academic success and attainment; it is about learning about the world, about relationships and about ourselves. It is about trying new things, making new friends and finding our place in the world. To miss school is to miss the many experiences that shape the choices we make, the opportunities we have and the quality of life that we lead.

Of particular concern is the high rate of persistent absenteeism which is above both local and national benchmarks. We know that some of our most vulnerable children are more likely to be persistently absent from school, and we know that this is having a detrimental impact on their progress, attainment and safety.



What is good attendance?

What the DfE says:

The Department for Education (DfE) says that attendance over 95% is considered “good”.

Hundreds of children in Middlesbrough are achieving 100% school attendance and we should all aspire to that level.

Research shows that “good” school attendance can directly impact life outcomes for our young people.

Did you know?

90% Attendance is regarded as “poor” attendance.

90% means that the young person is missing a full day of school every 2 weeks.

This equates to 20 days and approximately 120 hours of lost learning every year.

For young people sitting their year 6 SATs, 90% attendance each year would mean 140 days lost and approximately 840 hours of lost learning.

For young people sitting their GCSEs in year 11, 90% attendance each year would mean 240 days lost and approximately 1,440 hours of lost learning.



Our Vision

We want all Middlesbrough children to have fantastic school attendance, regardless of the setting or the barriers they may face.

We believe that by improving attendance we will:

Ensure more children and young people have a happy and enriched life experience

Overcome some of the challenges we have all faced during and after the pandemic

Help children build positive, long lasting friendships and lead happy lives

Improve mental health and wellbeing of children and families

Reduce child exploitation abuse and anti-social behaviour

Help children and families prosper socially and economically

Increase chances of success in further or higher education, or on apprenticeships

Improve the employability of young people

Improve lifestyles and better prepare our young people for adulthood and the world of work

Impact of the COVID-19 pandemic

The COVID-19 pandemic created huge disruption for children, families, and educators. Attendance at school became more challenging for all. The disruption to learning created by the closure of schools and settings and the creation of remote learning packages is unprecedented. It is important that we work together to overcome the challenges created by the pandemic and make sure all our children are supported to return to school and catch up on learning.

Our Attendance Strategy covers the next three years from 2024 to 2027 and will direct our work in improving school attendance over that time. One of our guiding principles in developing this strategy has been to build on our existing partnership working with schools, academies, partners and stakeholders. This will ensure our local approach is not only in line with current government guidance and legislation, but that it recognises the needs of our community, post pandemic, and seeks to empower and support it.

Who is responsible for ensuring good attendance?

Ultimately it is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure that their children receive appropriate full-time education according to their age, ability and aptitude. This usually means making sure a child is registered at a school and attends regularly and on time.

The term “parent” can include anyone who has parental responsibility for the child, or who has care of the child – in other words, lives with and helps provide day to day care for the child.

Whilst regular school attendance is predominantly the responsibility of parents and carers, schools play a central role in ensuring that children and young people attend school regularly. This involves playing a proactive role in the promotion of regular attendance.

Many other stakeholders are involved in helping to ensure good attendance, for example the Attendance Team at the Local Authority, Social Workers, Health Care professionals and the Police.

What are our roles?

The role of parents/carers and pupils

Parents and carers are asked to:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually unless there is a valid reason for absence which is accepted by the school's headteacher
- Intervene promptly and work closely with the school and local authority to resolve any issues when attendance problems occur
- Comply with their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the school attendance policy
- Avoid term time holidays
- Discuss and resolve any issues surrounding their child's attendance with members of school staff - parents should not keep children away from school whilst they are resolving any issues
- Ensure that their child continues to attend their current school until a place is available at another school if a transfer has been requested

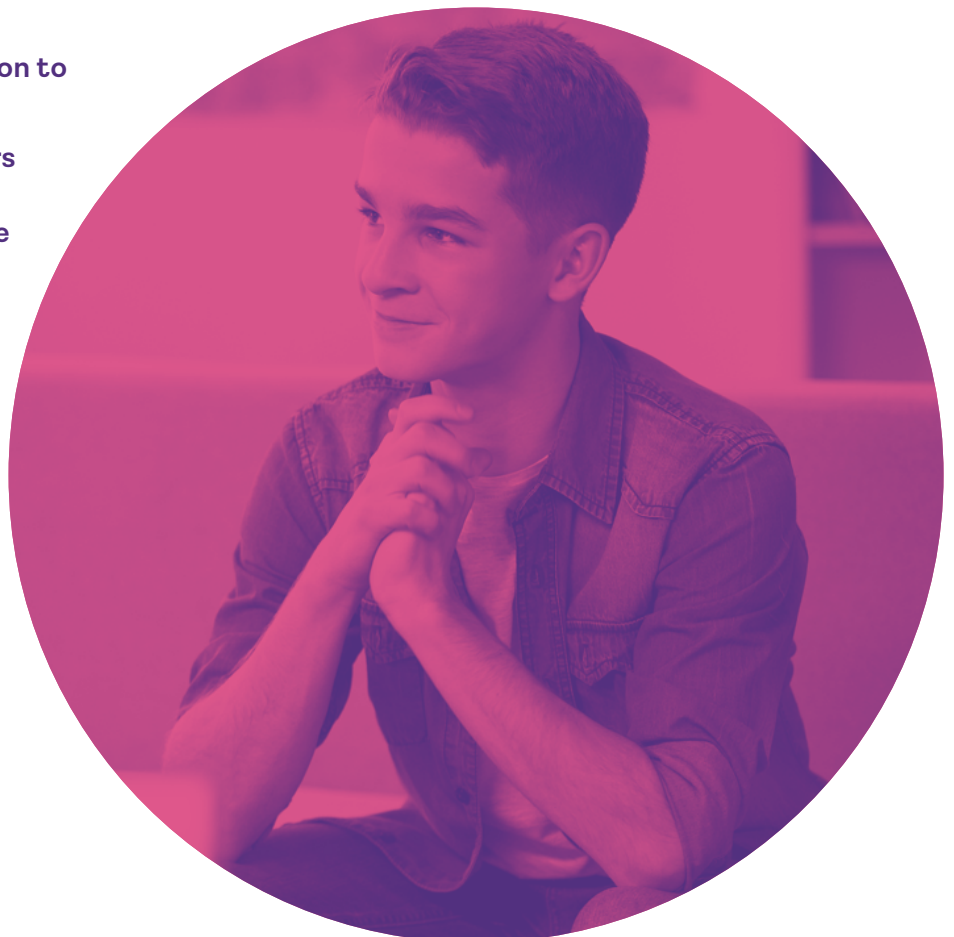
Children and young people are asked to:

- Attend school regularly and punctually in accordance with the agreed timetable
- Stay in school for the school day unless lunchtime arrangements are agreed with the school
- Ensure they arrive at school in correct uniform and equipped for the school day
- Follow the school rules



The role of schools and academies

- Have a whole-school ethos which reinforces good attendance
- Set annual targets for attendance and monitor progress towards them
- Appoint a member of the Senior Leadership Team to take strategic responsibility for attendance matters and ensure all school staff are clear about their individual responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to attendance
- Ensure that staff receive adequate training and development opportunities in relation to attendance (e.g. ensure that administrative staff are appropriately trained in using electronic attendance monitoring systems and all staff understand early help procedures)
- Comply with statutory registration and procedures in line with Children Missing Education statutory guidance for removing a child from roll
- Submit attendance returns to the DfE and LA as required
- Regularly monitor the effectiveness of their registration system
- Contact parents on the first day of absence
- Take appropriate action and inform the LA when any pupil is absent for more than 10 days without contact or a reason being provided
- Clearly communicate their attendance policy to all staff, pupils and parents
- Ensure parents/carers are supported in promoting the regular and punctual attendance of their children
- Provide easily accessible pastoral support to pupils who have become, or are at risk of becoming, disengaged from the education system and work with other partners and agencies to support pupils and families
- Involve medical personnel (e.g. the school nurse) in relation to long-term medical absences
- Ensure that that senior leaders regularly analyse and report school attendance data to the governing body and use it to inform planning to further improve attendance
- Implement a clear escalation process for managing attendance, prior to local authority involvement, with clarity about respective roles and responsibilities at each stage



The role of the Local Authority

The key principle which underpins the local authority's procedures for managing attendance is the belief that regular and punctual attendance is the key to academic and social development. This will in turn safeguard vulnerable young people and will improve their life chances.

When appropriate, if support options provided to parents have not succeeded, we will take the lead role on behalf of any school in using legal powers as a last resort to address poor attendance. This statutory intervention is available to all schools.

The local authority will:

- **Provide a traded EWO offer for schools**
- **Arrange multi-agency meetings and help create action plans with schools and relevant services for those children with very low attendance. The LA will meet with schools' Attendance Champions to review policies, data and best practice**
- **Provide Early Help support to work with families to improve attendance where required**
- **Ensure school attendance is a priority for families for children with a social worker**
- **Ensure SEND and the Inclusion Team provide support and guidance to families with EHCP and SEND needs**
- **Provide support to ensure schools can gather enough evidence to move to legal intervention where necessary**
- **Identify children who are not receiving an education**
- **Ensure our statutory duties for school attendance are fulfilled**
- **Establish a communications campaign to raise the profile of school attendance**
- **Continue to monitor and escalate the attendance of vulnerable children through the VCAP process**
- **Provide events throughout the year to raise and celebrate the profile of good attendance**
- **Share good practice**



The role of other agencies and stakeholders

Early Years

Whilst attendance in early years settings before the age of 5 is not statutory, early years is where lifelong habits are established. Securing good early years attendance therefore is an important foundation on which children will go on to thrive throughout their school life and beyond.

Our early years staff will provide advice, guidance and support to families and settings to help secure good attendance. The same person-centred approach and keen desire for early intervention will feature in all our practice and development work with settings.

Virtual School

The Virtual School will provide specific advice and bespoke support to help improve the attendance of looked after children. Where the attendance of a looked after child is a cause for concern or appears to be falling, schools are advised to get in touch with their named contact at the Virtual School to discuss next steps.

For all other children who have a social worker the Virtual School, working closely with Children's Social Care, has put in place the Vulnerable Children's Attendance Project (VCAP) as a strategy to provide additional support. More details about VCAP and how it works can be found within this strategy.

Family Hubs

Engagement with young children and their families through local Family Hubs is a key opportunity to work with parents to ensure that they understand the importance of their role in ensuring good attendance at school. Staff working in these settings are well placed to support parents and to emphasise the crucial role parents play in their child's learning and development. Our Family Hub teams play a critical part in school readiness planning. When children start school, family hub staff can support the transition, working with the school staff to ensure a positive start, which includes good attendance.

Health Services

The school nursing service is available to all children in Middlesbrough schools. The school nurses support with health education in schools as well as providing support for both physical and mental health needs. Their role in attendance can often be key and the local authority engage with the services on a regular basis.

Health providers also support children with complex medical needs to attend school on a regular basis. The local authority recognise that many families rely on these services to maintain good levels of attendance.

What do we know already?

There are many reasons why a child or young person may be missing school. It is important that professionals working with families take the time to understand those reasons and work in a solution focused way to overcome barriers to regular attendance.

It is also important that when considering poor attendance, a holistic approach is taken. This should consider the emotional, social, economic, and academic reasons why a child or young person may be missing school and how, through the support of the school and/or other agencies, barriers to regular attendance may be reduced or removed.

We know that many schools and agencies do this work very effectively; however, our analysis tells us that there is more that we can do to make sure that this approach is consistently applied across the town.

We believe that when teams and services come together, in a person-centred way, we are likely to use our resources more effectively and instigate long lasting change in behaviours and life experiences.

We know that there are lots of positive examples of good practice in schools, teams and organisations in relation to the management of attendance. However, this work is often not joined up enough to really make a difference for children and families.

We also know that sometimes attendance is impacted because of the capacity of others to provide the right level of care and support to children and young people; sometimes this relates to complex health needs or challenging social/ family circumstances. It is important that teams working with families acknowledge this and work in a solution focused way to minimise absence from school.

To improve attendance we need to develop:

- **A person-centred approach to the identification and management of poor attendance**
- **A clear and well communicated graduated response built on early intervention so that children and families get the help they need when they need it**
- **A multi-agency approach so that children and families get help from the right person or service at the right time and that attendance isn't just seen as an issue for schools**



What can schools do?

- Have high expectations for every pupil's attendance
- Communicate these expectations clearly and consistently
- Make sure staff, pupils and families understand that absence is a potential safeguarding risk
- Convey clear messages about how absence affects attainment, wellbeing and wider outcomes
- Have an 'attendance champion' in the senior leadership team
- Use clear and consistently applied systems to improve, reward and incentivise attendance
- Analyse the data regularly to ensure that intervention is delivered quickly to address absence (register inspections, code analysis, cohort and group monitoring, punctuality, lesson attendance across subjects and benchmarking)
- Follow the delivery model and expectations for Local Authorities set out by DfE
- Work with children, families, schools and partners to find new ways to celebrate great attendance
- Review our practice guidance in relation to early help and social care practices to make sure that a consistent approach is taken to the management of poor attendance

What can the LA do?

- Listen to parents to find out why their children are not attending
- Ensure that attendance is always recorded accurately
- Make sure that attendance is 'everyone's business' in school
- Understand there is an interrelationship between attendance and the quality of the curriculum, ethos and behaviour
- Challenge parents who do not make sure that their children attend, but also offer support
- Provide data at cohort, group and individual pupil level
- Encourage health providers to work to better support children and families with complex health needs
- Review our SEND practices to ensure poor attendance and the reasons for it are considered at multi agency meetings, individual reviews and SEND assessments
- Develop a training offer for school-based staff, headteachers, governors, health and care professionals and other key partners so that there is a common appreciation of what we mean by good attendance and how best to secure it
- Develop a communications campaign
- Revise our safeguarding practices so we respond to the risks associated with poor attendance and the escalate appropriately
- Ensure governance systems and processes are in place to manage key issues such as the attendance of vulnerable students

In summary

For all pupils:

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Ensure their child attends every day the school is open except when a statutory reason applies
- Notify the school as soon as possible when their child has to be unexpectedly absent (e.g. sickness)
- Only request leave of absence in exceptional circumstances and do so in advance
- Book any medical appointments around the school day where possible

Schools are expected to:

- Have a clear school attendance policy on the school website which all staff, pupils and parent/carers understand
- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of good attendance
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers
- Have robust daily processes to follow up absence
- Have a dedicated senior leader with overall responsibility for championing and improving attendance

Local Authority is expected to:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance and make it a key focus of all frontline council services
- Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools to remove area-wide barriers to attendance
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice

For pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (90 – 94%):

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support

Schools are expected to:

- Use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance
- Work with pupils and their parents to address the reasons for absence
- Where out of school barriers are identified, signpost access to any required services
- Take an active part in the multi-agency effort with the LA and other partners. Act as the lead practitioner where all partners agree that the school is the best placed lead service. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the school, continue to work with the LA and partners

Local Authority is expected to:

- Hold a termly conversation with schools to identify, discuss and signpost services for pupils who are PA
- Facilitate a voluntary early help assessment where appropriate. Act as lead practitioner where all partners agree that the LA is best placed to lead. Where the lead practitioner is outside of the LA, continue to work with the school and partners

For pupils who are persistently or severely absent (less than 90%):

Parents/Carers are expected to:

- Work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance
- Proactively engage with the support offered

Schools are expected to:

- Put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers
- Where there is a lack of engagement, hold more formal conversations with parents and be clear about the potential need for legal intervention in future
- Where support is not working, work with the local authority on legal intervention
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, intensify support through children's social care
- Work with other schools such as schools previously attended and the schools of any siblings
- If the pupil has a social worker, inform them of unexplained absences

Local Authority is expected to:

- Continue support as for pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent
- All services should make the SA group the top priority for support. This may include consideration for an education, health and care plan, or alternative form of educational provision
- Work jointly with the school to provide formal support options
- Where there are safeguarding concerns, ensure joint working between the school, children's social care and other statutory safeguarding partners
- Where support is not working, enforce attendance through legal intervention (including prosecution as a last resort)

For pupils with a social worker:

- Regularly monitor attendance and put a PEP in place for looked after children
- Social worker to ensure the care plan reflects the risk and that the risks are mitigated

Vulnerable Children Attendance Project

Supporting children with a social worker

The Vulnerable Children Attendance Project (VCAP) will deliver the Local Authority's strategic role in promoting the Education outcomes of Children with a Social Worker (CWSW) (as required in the DfE June 22 Education Document - Promoting the education of children with a Social Worker).

It is vital that all parties, including the VSH, the wider Local Authority, school and trust recognise the importance of information sharing and adopt effective procedures and principles to enable this.

A diverse range of agencies and professionals engage in the lives of children with social workers. For a child who is currently in receipt of children's social care support and is subject to a Child in Need or Child Protection plan, social workers will play a critical role in supporting children and their families. Relationships and clarity of duties and responsibilities are essential in supporting children to reach their potential.

VCAP objectives are to:

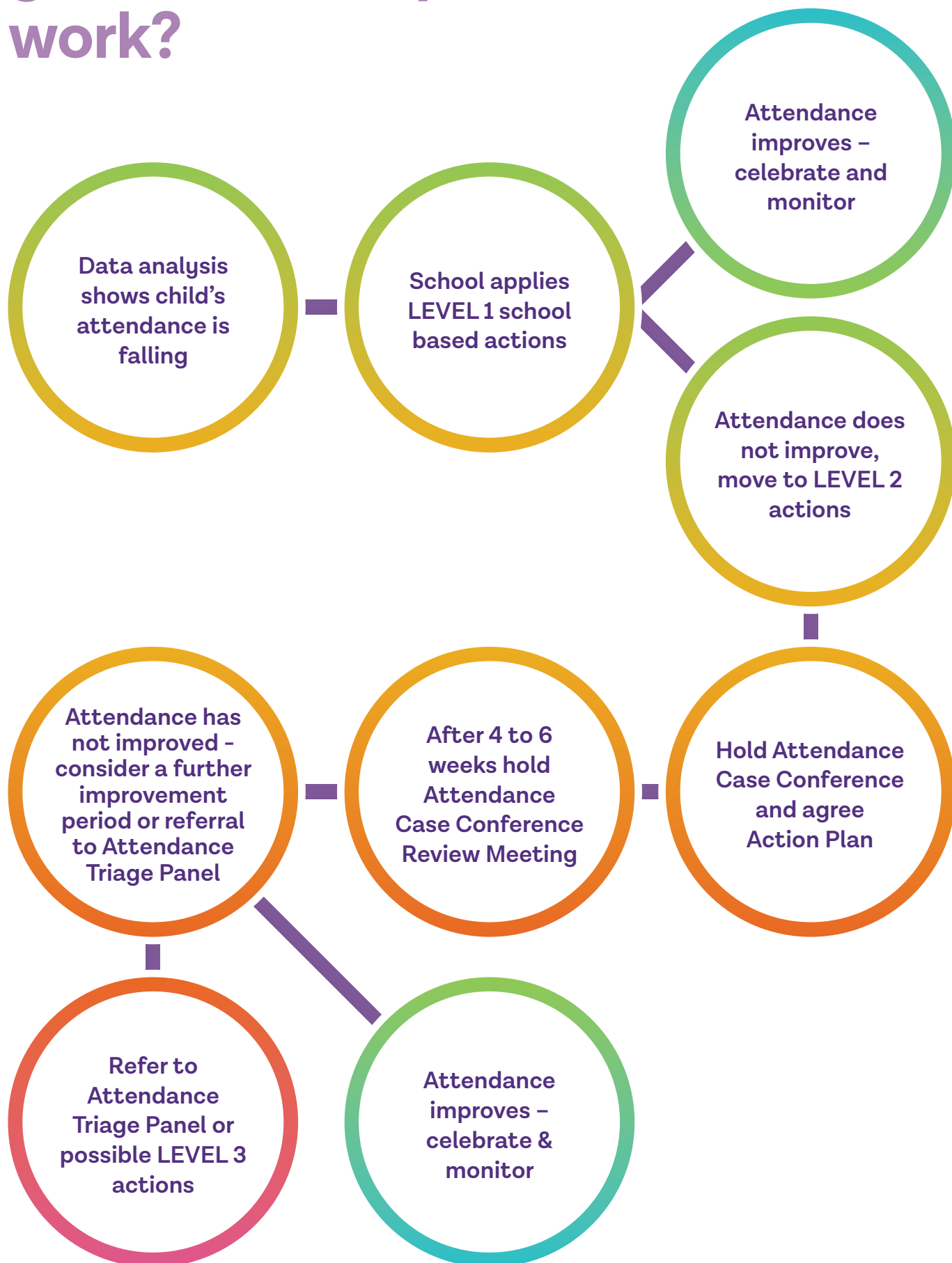
- **Rigorously track local attendance data for CWSW**
- **Make attendance a key focus of all frontline council services**
- **Use attendance data from schools and Children's Services to identify the CWSW school age cohorts, schools and neighbourhoods on which to focus efforts**
- **Ensure all frontline operational staff involved in attendance, associated teams and local partners understand their role in delivering this strategy and working together**
- **Have a dedicated Attendance CWSW Attendance Officer and VCAP Lead who will provide communication and advice on the following three core functions**
 - **Targeting Support Meetings**
 - **Multi-disciplinary support for families**
 - **Information, advice, and guidance to key stake holders**

The VCAP project will monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker by:

- **Triangulating data using existing collection methods**
- **Identifying children who are persistently and severally absent**
- **Driving a multiagency approach to care planning focused on improving attendance for children with below 20%**
- **Provide training on barriers and evidence-based strategies for all key stakeholders**



How does Middlesbrough's graduated response work?



The graduated response

The graduated approach is a framework of staged interventions. Interventions begin with effective whole-school approaches to managing the attendance of all children. School policies should promote good attendance, make clear what everyone's roles and responsibilities are and clearly outline what action is taken at each stage so that early intervention can take place. An effective whole-school approach will include regular monitoring and reviewing of practice.

The graduated approach enables the lead professional – often based within the school – to identify opportunities to work with other agencies as attendance becomes a concern. Rapid and efficient early intervention will help prevent long term absence from school.

There are 3 graduated levels of intervention and support:



Level 1

Early intervention

Level 2

Targeted
intervention

Level 3

Statutory
intervention

Level 1: Early Intervention

Primary Responsibility: Schools

Schools should implement basic procedures to challenge attendance and promote improvements. School should contact parents either to highlight the concerns or seek information about why children are absent where attendance is becoming a cause for concern. This can be through initial phone calls home from relevant staff to discuss absences and ask if there is any support school can offer. When a pupil does return to school, there should be supportive conversations with parents and/or with the pupil directly (secondary-aged). Any improvement in attendance should be acknowledged.

However, where attendance continues to be a concern, school should make further contact with parents via letters home and home visits to have a broader conversation about reasons for absence and focus on the potential impact of poor attendance. School should attempt to resolve any issues that arise and offer support and advice. At this stage schools should consider whether the family need further support and complete an early help assessment.

Parents/carers must:

- Ensure that their children attend school regularly and punctually
- Report the reason that their child is absent from school on each day of absence
- Work with school staff and other agencies
- Book non-urgent medical appointments for their child outside of school hours wherever possible
- Avoid taking leave of absence during term time
- Ensure their children have the correct uniform and necessary equipment
- Ensure their children attend school whilst they are resolving any issues
- Ensure that their child attends their current school when they are seeking a place at another school

Children & Young People must:

- Come into school every day and on time
- Attend lessons
- Stick to the school rules



Schools should:

Set out in their policy what actions will take place for pupils if attendance falls.

School actions might include:

- **First day absence procedures to inform parents**
- **Regular phone calls and texts to parents**
- **Discussions with the pupil and / or parent about issues that may be worrying them and preventing good attendance**
- **Establish whether there are any medical needs that may be impacting on attendance and consider a referral to the School Nursing Service.**
- **Signpost to appropriate apps, online sources of support, early intervention services, outside agencies, skilled colleagues in school, school counselling service or GP if appropriate.**
- **Meetings in school with parents**
- **Home visits**
- **Staff involvement e.g. learning mentor / trusted adult**
- **Support plans setting out bespoke strategies**
- **Referral for Early Help**
- **Education penalty notice warning letter (follow the Penalty Notice procedure) eg. for holiday absences**
- **Access other specialist support**

Should insufficient improvement not be seen, the case should be referred to Level 2 of the graduated process. If the school has a traded agreement with the Education Welfare Service, a referral can be made to the school's named EWO.

School should write to all adults with parental responsibility, summarising the attendance issues and the support that has been offered/implemented.



Level 2: Targeted Intervention

Primary Responsibility: Schools and Education Welfare Service (if traded)

A referral can be made to the Education Welfare Service to undertake casework with the family to support and deliver interventions at Level 2 as part of a traded offer. Schools not trading with the EWS must complete case work and gather appropriate evidence themselves.

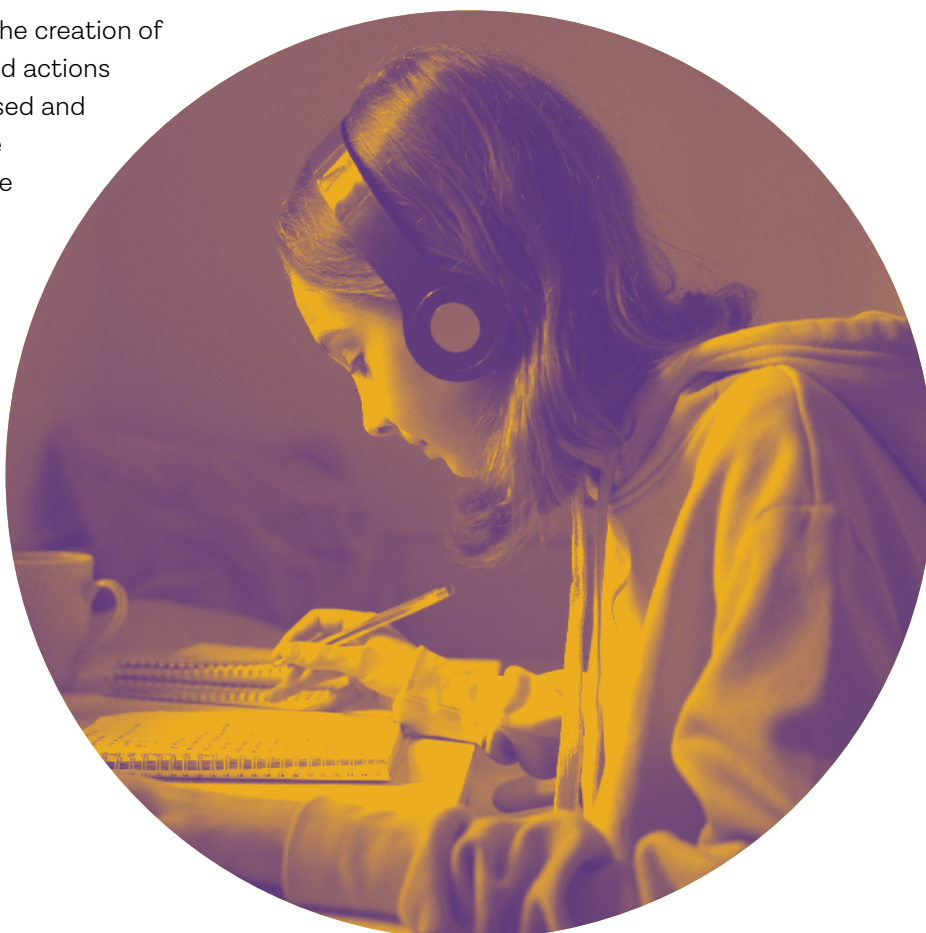
Level 2 intervention is an escalation where the school should send a warning letter to parents/carers. This may include an invite to an Attendance Case Conference. School should include the pupil(s) in the case conference where it is appropriate.

The Case Conference should be led by an appropriate member of the school staff and attendance and pastoral staff should attend. The meeting should focus on:

- **The reasons for absence, emerging absence patterns or trends**
- **Strategies to improve attendance and remove barriers. This should include supportive approaches to address poor school attendance including appropriate external support such as Early Help**
- **The voice of the child**
- **Any medical issues as reasons for absence at this stage and where appropriate a referral to be made to the School Health Team. Consideration should be given to Home and Hospital Teaching (contact the SEND & Inclusion Team for advice)**

The meeting should conclude with the creation of an Action Plan setting out the agreed actions - the plan should be clear, personalised and formally recorded. Parent must have the opportunity to discuss and agree actions and support offered and be given a copy of the Plan.

Following the case conference, school should determine whether a referral to Early Help would support improvement. A referral may result in broader support than the school individually can provide, where it is clear the child or family would benefit. In some cases it may be more appropriate to move directly to Level 3.



A Review date must be set for 4–6 weeks following the first case conference.

The review dates should be clearly communicated to parents.

At the review success can be celebrated or further concerns discussed.

If parents do not attend the planned review, without notice or explanation, schools should undertake a planned home visit in order to carry out the plan review.

If the pupil is already in the Child In Need (CIN) or Child Protection (CP) process, a separate School Attendance Improvement Meeting may not be needed as actions to address attendance must be included in the child/family plan. Schools should liaise with the lead professional to ensure that is the case. If they are not included, schools should have a separate school meeting prior to any planned review of the CIN or CP Conference or Core Group.

School should continue to monitor attendance regularly, ensuring first day calling for any further absences and follow-up conversations with parents and pupil (where appropriate).

Where the pupil has a Social Worker, school should inform them of any unexplained absences. Attendance must be included in the discussion and recorded as part of any CiN, CP Conference or Core group.

School should maintain regular contact with family, including meetings and home visits as necessary and follow their safeguarding procedures.

Next steps

School must review the Attendance Improvement Plan at end of the agreed 4–6 week review period.

School can offer a further period of monitoring where needed where positive progress has been made and parental engagement is apparent.

However, if there has not been progress and attendance has not improved and/or parents have not engaged school should decide whether to start the formal process which may lead to enforcement. This should be recorded. This review should include:

- **Attendance levels (with authorised & unauthorised absence rates)**
- **Consideration of previous actions and their impact**
- **Parental contact and engagement**
- **Pupil view where appropriate**
- **Consideration of the impact of prosecution should this be the final outcome**

This should be recorded and parents informed in writing. Advice can be sought from the school's allocated Education Welfare Officer (EWO) as to next steps.

Referrals to Education Welfare Officers for enforcement for pupils that are part of a CIN or Child Protection process should not be made without consultation with the lead professional or Social Worker.

Where attendance is not improving and/or parents are not fully engaging consider an Attendance Triage Panel referral.



Attendance Triage Panel Referral

The Attendance Triage Panel is a multi agency panel that will ensure the family is directed down the most appropriate pathway to bring about improvement.

- **Schools can discuss consideration of a Triage Panel Referral with their named Education Welfare Officer at the Targeted Support Meetings**
- **Schools should discuss the plans to support children who are severe PA or at risk of becoming so, with the named school EWO at the Targeted Support Meetings**
- **The referral will include school evidence that initial support action has been undertaken, and support put in place where additional need has been identified. There should also be evidence that the parent/carer(s) have failed to effectively engage with Stage 1 and 2 interventions. An Attendance Referral Form should be completed to evidence actions and interventions taken.**

The multi agency Triage Panel will consider all aspects of the case including family circumstances, school interventions, the child's response and any other relevant factors. The Panel will determine what the most effective next steps for the child and the family will be. The determination of the Panel will be communicated to school and parents/carers. In the most extreme cases, the next step will be statutory intervention (enforcement) at Level 3.



Level 3: Statutory Intervention

Primary Responsibility:

Education Welfare Service (following referral from school)

Level 3 statutory legal action may be recommended by the Triage Panel when:

- All attempts to engage with the family at intervention stages 1 & 2 have not brought about improvements to school attendance
- Clear evidence of support /meetings and reviews have been offered to the family
- The pupil meets the criteria for referral (levels of unauthorised absence)

Legal Action

If the decision is made by the Education Welfare Service to initiate legal proceedings schools must provide the following:

- **Witness statement**
- **Documents confirming actions from school to seek improvements to school attendance. This must include any meetings, home visits, discussions with parents, pupil voice or any other actions taken**
- **Registration Certificate**

The named Education Welfare Officer will inform schools of the outcome of any legal actions undertaken.

The expectation is that schools will continue to liaise and support families and children throughout the time of any criminal investigation/legal actions and update our service of any actions or further information.



How will we know the Attendance Strategy has been successful?

Good attendance leads to better outcomes for children. The local authority will have succeeded when the gap between Middlesbrough's attendance and national attendance rates reduces for all children, including the most vulnerable.

Improved school attendance will lead to better outcomes at GCSE and more children will remain in educational post 16. Better attainment for all will mean more opportunities for our young people to thrive and succeed in the future. Stronger school attendance will lead to a reduction in anti-social behaviour and criminal activity which will benefit all of Middlesbrough's communities. A successful implementation of this strategy will mean increased social equity and children living happy and fulfilling lives.

Please see the supporting documents listed below:

- 1. Attendance Toolkit. This contains detailed information and template letters relating to leave of absence, unauthorised absence and prosecution**
- 2. Penalty Notice Code of Conduct – issued by the LA annually**
- 3. Working together to improve school attendance. Guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities: May 2022**





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Middlesbrough Attendance Strategy 2024-2027

October 2023