

# Hampshire Education Advisory Panel November 2022 School Attendance



**Karen Nye**  
**County Education Manager**  
**(Vulnerable Children and Young People)**



# Absence data 2019 (%)

	Primary '19	Secondary '19	All '19
<b>HCC</b>	<b>3.7</b>	<b>5.4</b>	<b>4.5</b>
<b>SN</b>	3.9	5.4	4.6
<b>Nat</b>	4.0	5.5	4.7

- Reflects a similar trend over time prior to 2019
- Hampshire (HCC) above or in line with statistical neighbours (SN) and national comparators (Nat)



# Absence data – Autumn and Spring term trend (%)

	Aut '17 Spr '18	Aut '18 Spr '19	Aut '21 Spr '22
Primary HCC	3.8	3.6	<b>5.9</b>
Primary Nat	4.2	3.9	<b>6.2</b>
Secondary HCC	5.4	5.3	<b>8.8</b>
Secondary Nat	5.4	5.2	<b>8.6</b>
Special HCC	9.1	8.7	<b>12.7</b>
Special Nat	10.3	10.1	<b>13.2</b>
HCC All	4.6	4.5	<b>7.3</b>

A substantial increase in absence across all phases believed to be in line with the national picture



# Persistent Absenteeism (%)

	Aut '17 Spr '18	Aut '18 Spr '19	Aut '21 Spr '22
Primary HCC	7.8	6.8	<b>15.3</b>
Primary Nat	9.6	8.4	<b>18.2</b>
Secondary HCC	13.6	12.9	<b>27.1</b>
Secondary Nat	13.6	12.7	<b>26.7</b>
Special HCC	26.2	25.4	<b>39.1</b>
Special Nat	30.1	28.5	<b>40.2</b>
HCC All	10.7	10.0	<b>21.0</b>

A substantial increase in absenteeism of 10% or more post-pandemic



# Children experiencing vulnerability

- Absence rate is substantially increased
- 3x more likely to be persistently absent if with a social worker
- Around one third of children looked after have experienced/are experiencing persistent absenteeism
- 46% of Hampshire children (53% nationally) subject to a child protection plan were persistently absent in 2021
- A worsening situation locally and nationally since the pandemic



# Children's Commissioner for England recommendations

- All schools create a culture which prioritises and obsesses about attendance and promotes this message amongst children and parents
- Schools and wider services build trusted and supportive relationships with children, and their families, who are persistently or severely absent
- All attendance and behaviour policy documents have a version that is accessible and in child friendly language
- Attendance should be prioritised in the Parent Pledge, announced in the Schools White Paper alongside current proposed topics, such as the quality of teaching, and the focus on reading and writing

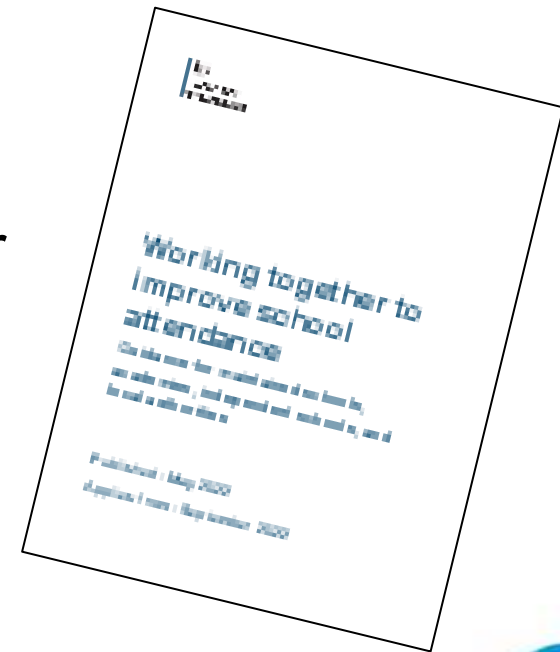


# DfE Guidance

## Working together to improve school attendance

May '22

Implementation Sept '22 with a 'transition period'; statutory when parliamentary time allows, no sooner than Sept '23



# DfE Guidance

Help schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance and improve consistency of support by:

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





# Guidance covers ...

1. The importance of school attendance
2. Expectations of schools
3. Expectations of academy trust boards and governing bodies of maintained schools
- 4. Expectations of local authorities**
5. Persistent and severe absence
6. Attendance legal intervention
7. Contents of the admissions register ('the school roll')
8. Contents of the attendance register



# DfE's 'big changes'

- **Clarity of expectation:** schools, trusts and LAs will all have clearly defined statutory roles for the first time, set out in a clear table of responsibilities
- **Earlier intervention:** Schools will have legal responsibilities to proactively improve attendance for the first time, underpinned by more timely sharing of attendance data
- **Support first:** All pupils and parents no matter where they live in the country will have clear expectations from their school, be informed about their child's attendance and have access to early intervention and **support first before any legal action** if it becomes problematic



# DfE's 'big changes'

- **Targeted whole family support:** Attendance teams in LAs will work in tandem with Early Help to provide a whole-family response with a single assessment, plan and lead practitioner
- **Independent schools:** data will be collected for the first time, and independent schools will receive the same support from LAs as all other schools



# What does it mean for the LA?

- Collective responsibility – everyone’s business
- Rigorously track local attendance **data** to devise a **strategic approach** to attendance
- Have a **School Attendance Support Team (SAST)** which provides core functions free of charge to all schools regardless of type
- Monitor and improve the attendance of **CYP with a social worker** through the Virtual School



# Data and strategy

Strategy should prioritise and target support (pupils, pupil groups, schools) to unblock area-wide barriers to attendance:

- Recognise importance of attendance and understand how attendance improvement is everyone's business
- Make attendance a key focus of all frontline council services
- Use attendance data from all schools to identify the pupil cohorts, schools, and neighbourhoods/ towns on which to focus efforts



# Data and strategy

- Use analysis to set a clear vision for improving attendance across the geographical area, underpinned by tangible short and longer term aims and priorities for improving attendance for particular cohorts of pupils identified
- All appropriate frontline operational staff in attendance, associated teams and local partners must understand their role in delivering this strategy and working together
- Evaluate and review strategy regularly



# SAST

- Expectation – SAST working with all schools
- DfE has not prescribed what form or delivery model this team must follow, but it is expected to provide the following 4 core functions free of charge, to all schools in their area:
  - Communication and advice
  - Targeting Support Meetings
  - Multi-disciplinary support for families
  - Legal intervention

LAs can continue to trade other elements of their attendance management and improvement to schools and trusts, for example delivery of school level responsibilities or training for attendance staff



# SAST core function 1 – communication and advice

- Provide every school with a named point of contact in the SAST to support with queries and advice
- Make clear how schools, the SAST and other partners should work together to provide voluntary and/or formal support for pupils and families
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice





# SAST core function 2 – targeting support meetings

- Hold a termly Targeting Support Meeting (TST) with every school in the area to identify pupils who need support with removing barriers to attendance
- Assist schools to identify areas to focus on in their school policies, through analysing their data
- If the LA already has regular meetings with schools (such as ‘team around the school’ meetings) the school, SAST, and other relevant partners may join this meeting as the TST rather than having a separate meeting



# SAST core function 3 – multi-disciplinary support for families

- Build on the existing move to Early Help, whole-family working
- Work jointly with all local partners to offer multi-agency support to pupils who need it, including acting as lead practitioner where the best placed service is within the LA
- Build effective data sharing opportunities with different partners as part of the overall data sharing/governance arrangements to ensure a joined-up approach
- Ensure staff are appropriately trained to understand the importance of attendance, and foster a collaborative culture across Early Help services



# SAST core function 4 – legal intervention

- Work with schools to formalise support or take forward legal action where voluntary support does not work
- Understand and make use of the full range of legal intervention measures as appropriate, including parental responsibility measures



# Monitor and improve attendance of CYP with a social worker

- Set aspirational targets for attendance of CYP with a social worker
- Secure the regular attendance of LAC as their corporate parent
- Provide support and advice to previously LAC
- Monitor and improve the attendance of CYP with a social worker through the Virtual School

To facilitate this, schools are expected to inform a pupil's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school



# What next for us?

- Council/departmental strategy
- Roles and responsibilities – everyone’s business
- Early Help review
- Workforce fit for purpose – core functions
- Understanding the ‘typical’ barriers and complexities
- Clarity to schools re expectations/roles
- Recognising connections: well-being, curriculum offer, poverty .....
- Independent sector
- Efficiencies and financial implications



