

Every School Day Counts

Developing a whole school approach to improving attendance that is underpinned by high expectations and early intervention



A Camden Learning Toolkit for Schools

July 2026

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Introduction

Camden has a long history of poor low school attendance compared to other local authorities. This toolkit sets out approaches that enable a culture founded on high expectations, early intervention, and support-first. This guidance is to provide Camden schools with the tools and expected approaches in response to our attendance crisis.

Absence from school is a serious issue that has consequences for the educational attainment, wellbeing and safeguarding of children. There is a correlation between poor school attendance and low levels of attainment. Therefore, promoting the importance of good attendance needs to be a priority for all schools and is achieved most effectively where there is a strong attendance culture.

A strong attendance culture can be characterised as one where the school demonstrates:

- Effective **whole-school practice** with **clear roles & responsibilities**
- Regular **communication with parents, staff and children** that emphasises the importance of attendance
- **Early and systematic intervention** when absences first occur

Success is most likely when attendance is seen as part of a wider whole school approach that is aligned with creating schools that children actively want to attend and feel safe in.

There should be close links between the school's attendance policy and other school policies such as those covering teaching and learning, behaviour, safeguarding, children with medical needs and special educational needs.

Improvements are unlikely to be successful when attendance is managed in isolation by the attendance officer and unconnected with the school's wider approach to raising standards and inclusion.

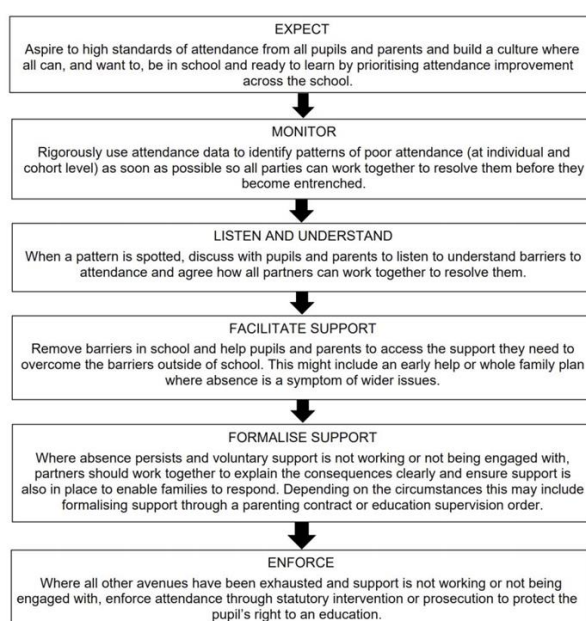
Expectations, duties and effective practice

The Department for Education (DfE) has issued statutory guidance that sets out the expectations of schools and local authorities for promoting attendance and addressing absence. This guide is consistent with the ‘Support First’ principles set out in [‘Working Together to Improve School Attendance’](#).

To manage and improve attendance effectively, all schools are expected to:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy that all staff, pupils, and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admissions information and have an effective day-to-day process in place for follow-up absence.
- Regularly monitor and analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with schools to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

The DfE guidance summarises the **‘support first’** approach as follows:



Wider Resources and Guidance for School Leaders

To support schools in developing the approach to improving attendance there are a range of resources and guidance available to support school leaders.

DfE has published a self-assessment tool, template action plan and supporting guidance. The **attendance toolkit** can be accessed at [Attendance toolkit for schools.pdf](#) and the **self-assessment** and **action plan** templates can be found at [RISE attendance and behaviour hubs: guidance for partner schools - GOV.UK](#).

All schools have been asked to complete the self-assessment and submit their action plan to Camden Learning to allow a collective understanding of the approaches schools are taking, and so that we know how we can best support you to achieve those goals.

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) has also published toolkit to support schools with improving attendance. This is built around six evidence-informed themes, which are:

- Build a holistic understanding of pupils and families, and diagnose specific needs
- Build a culture of community and belonging for pupils
- Communicate effectively with families
- Improve universal provision for all pupils
- Deliver targeted interventions to supplement universal provision
- Monitor the impact of approaches

The **EEF toolkit** can be accessed at [Supporting school attendance | EEF](#)

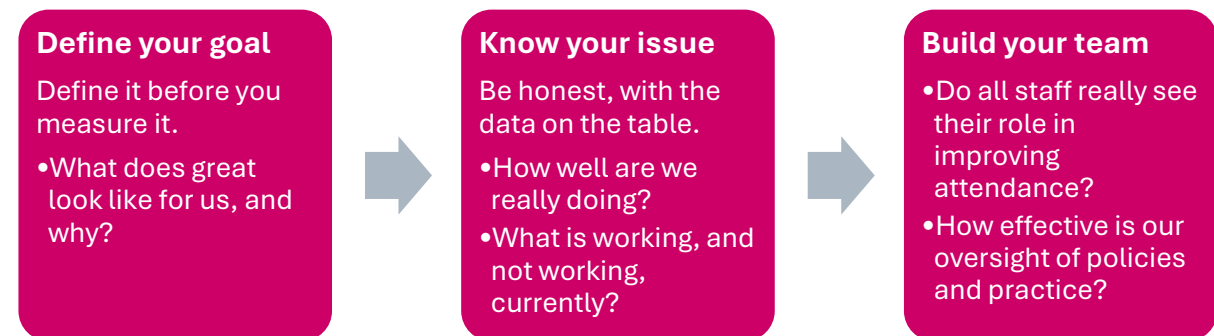
Camden Learning has produced its own **effective practice guide** based on the EEF themes, who supports schools to implement them and highlights examples of effective practice in Camden schools.

All Camden schools have been sent a copy of this guide. It can also be downloaded at [Camden_Learning_Attendance_Guide_Final.pdf](#)

The Stepping Stones to Ensuring Greater Impact

Where should I start?

As a leadership team you should first ask yourself the following:



The DfE similar schools' reports, the data in VYED and the Camden Learning data booklets, all provide schools with the tools they need to understand their specific attendance challenge. Schools should also use the DfE RISE self-assessment tool to reflect on their own school's approach to attendance. Once you know your issue you should set yourself no more than three goals, with associated actions.

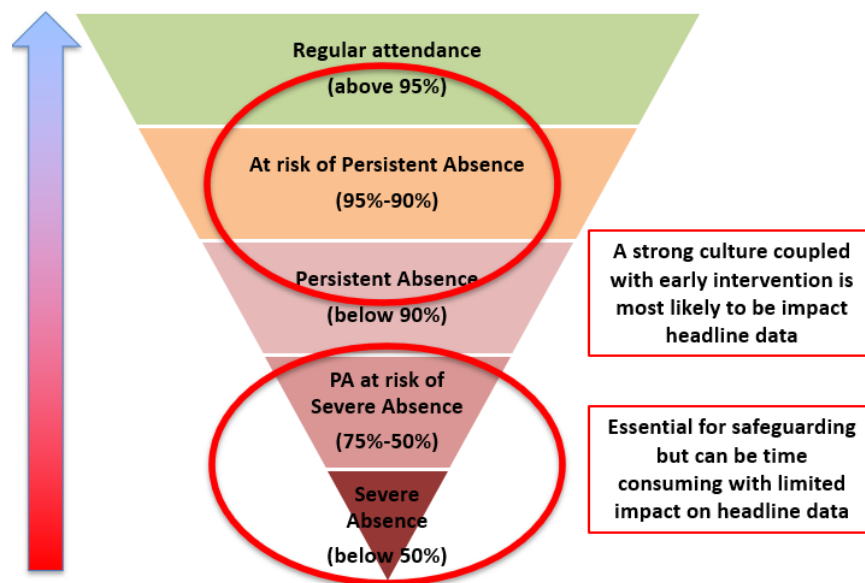
Goals should be SMART, with clear success criteria, for example,

'Reduce persistent absence by 2% by the end of the summer term'

Action plans should be submitted to Camden Learning's Attendance & Children Out of School team so we know how we can best support you to achieve those goals.

Don't leave it too late to intervene

It is important to act when attendance drops below 96% so that it can be addressed early and before absences becomes more problematic. Delaying intervention risks absence becoming an entrenched problem that is more time consuming, harder to address, and any improvement will have less impact on overall attendance figures.



In developing your approach to attendance improvement, it is important that you respond to those already below 85% but also intervene early to preventing pupils from becoming persistently absent when their attendance drops below 95%. This requires a parallel approach that not only addresses who are already PA but actively intervenes to prevent pupils from becoming PA.

Set your attendance improvement target

Children have only 190 school days each year. The starting expectation should be that 100% of children should attend 100% of the time. Whilst we recognise that some children will occasionally be absent the expectation should be that all pupils have attendance of at least 96%, which means no more than seven days absence in a year.

Schools must take proactive steps to ensure attendance remains as high as possible and that absences are kept to a minimum. To support this, they should develop ambitious targets that reflect where they aspire to be as a school in terms of attendance.

To support schools the DfE has set all schools an Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE) target, which is the **minimum** improvement that the DfE expects each school to make in that academic year. The DfE also publishes data on how your school compares to 20 similar schools. This is available each half term from the DfE's View Your Education Data (VYED) website

Attendance is also judged by Ofsted and to be graded as meeting the 'Expected Standard' the inspections toolkit states that overall attendance needs to be:

‘Broadly in line with national averages or shows an improving trend over time’.

When setting your school’s attendance targets you should consider the following:

- National and London attendance rates for overall and persistent absence
- Your DfE Attendance Baseline Improvement Expectation (ABIE)
- Your school’s attendance ranking relative to similar schools

Once you have set your target you can then consider actions you then need to take to achieve this.

Create a strong attendance culture

To improve attendance schools need to develop a strong attendance culture that fosters a sense of belonging, establishes clear routines and creates accountability.

When considering your attendance culture you should consider the following:

- Set the expectation that attendance is **everyone’s responsibility** and ensure all staff know the part they play in improving attendance. Appendix B sets out the relative roles and responsibilities of school staff to support this.
- Update your **attendance policy** to reflect your expectations and approach to interventions. Ensure staff know their role and that is communicated with parents/carers in a parent friendly format.
- **Train staff, including support staff** so they understand not only why attendance matters, but their role in improving attendance and how they can make a difference.
- Incorporate attendance in performance management discussions.

Five practical actions¹ that headteachers and attendance leads should take to help embed a strong attendance culture and drive improvement in their school

Identify absence risk before it becomes persistent absence. Do not wait until a child falls below 90%. The biggest mistake is intervening too late.	Schools should: • Review your weekly attendance analysis on VYED • Identify pupils slipping from 96%→94%→92% • Cross reference with behaviour, SEND, safeguarding and pastoral concerns • Identify named lead adults early.	Every Monday morning SLT should then review and agree actions relation to: • Pupils with below 96% attendance • Pupils with 3+ weeks of with an absence • Pupils with emerging patterns • Vulnerable cohorts See appendix B
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¹ Adapted from Colin Cattanach

Make attendance everyone's responsibility not just the attendance officer. Attendance can only be improved if all everyone knows their role and agency in making a difference	Schools should ensure: • Form tutors/class teachers greet pupils by name and welcome those that have been absent back, actively ensuring they can catch up on missed learning, alerting attendance leaders where a pupil absence becomes a concern and ensuring positive relationships with parents. • Leaders are visible at gates and know which pupils have been absent. • Pastoral teams are visible and actively seek to build connections with families who are a focus.	Ensure that there are 'no invisible children' by: • Linking every at-risk pupil to a trusted adult • Check-in daily with vulnerable pupils • Checking in with pupils after an absence • Addressing missed learning • Implementing tutor mentoring for addressing regular odd-day's off • Systems of first day and subsequent days calling that prompt and follow an agreed protocol and script. See appendix A for roles and responsibilities
Improve the morning experience by creating a calm, welcome start to the school day.	Schools should create calm and welcoming starts to the day by: • Greeting pupils by name on arrival and knowing which children have been absent. • Not just focussing on the negative (i.e. uniform) • Deploying senior staff visibly • Taking steps to know and reduce localised anxiety triggers	Ensure calm, welcoming starts to the day by: • Understanding the journey from the gate to tutor room, to first lesson • Identifying any potential anxiety triggers for individuals and cohorts • Ensuring registration is purposeful and supports a sense agency, purpose and belonging
Use data to drive action, not reports. Too many schools produce beautiful spreadsheets that nobody acts upon.	Schools should use attendance data to: • Ensure up to date knowledge of arising issues. • Initiate same-day conversations • Trigger rapid intervention • Identify support • Create accountability	Introduce a weekly 'Attendance Action Meeting involving SLT, attendance team, DSL, SENCO and pastoral leads. Each pupil discussed should have a: • Barrier identified • Action agreed • Timescale • Responsible adult • Review date See appendix B

Build belonging, not just compliance. Children rarely attend consistently where they feel disconnected. Attendance is often a proxy measure for belonging	Schools with the strongest attendance cultures are built around: • Identity • Participation • Pride • Relationships • Success	Audit for impact and reach: • Enrichment participation • Student voice • Rewards • Student leadership opportunities • Timetabling • Curriculum relevance
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Ensure Rigorous Processes, Policies and Systems

Underpinning targets, culture and engagement are school's processes, policies and systems. Ensure these are attendance focused on **early intervention** will ensure there is systemised focus on attendance and intervening early when absences first emerge.

Things to consider when thinking about your systems include:

- A regular forensic review of data using the DfE VYED data tools, such as the banding tool to target interventions and identify pupils for tracking and intervention.
- Create class-level dashboards for attendance and share with staff
- First-day calling for every absence; ensuring all parents/carers are spoken to and agree return date, with a log kept of contacts made and a script for staff to follow to ensure consistency and rigour in approach.
- Use the NHS illness guidance ([Is my child too ill for school? - NHS](#)) to reduce unnecessary illness absences
- Introduce a front-office script to standardise language and tone, consider which pupils would benefit from first day calling from a more senior member of staff due to a higher level of absence.

Effective schools regularly review their processes, policies and systems, taking a critically informed eye as to what is working as planned, and what is not.

Track pupils at risk of persistent absence (PA)

Once a pupil has missed 38 sessions (19 days) of school they will be classified as persistently absent as their attendance cannot then get above 90% for the year. The active tracking of pupils at risk of becoming persistently absent (i.e. their attendance falls below 95%) will inform your preventive approach to intervention.

One way of doing this is to regularly review which children are at risk of becoming persistently absent and using this to target interventions.

Monitoring point	At risk of PA (currently 90%-95%)	On track to be PA (currently below 90%)	Already PA (below 90% for year)
Autumn half-term	4+ sessions missed (2 days missed)	8+ sessions missed (4+ days missed)	38+ sessions missed (19+ days missed)
End of Autumn term	8+ sessions missed (4 days missed)	14+ sessions missed (7+ days missed)	38+ sessions missed (19+ days missed)
Spring half-term	10+ sessions missed (5 days missed)	20+ sessions missed (10+ days missed)	38+ sessions missed (19+ days missed)
End of Spring term	14+ sessions missed (7+ days missed)	26+ sessions missed (13+ days missed)	38+ sessions missed (19+ days missed)
Summer half-term	16+ sessions missed (8+ days missed)	32+ sessions missed (16+ days missed)	38+ sessions missed (19 days missed)

A persistent absence tracker template can be found in **Appendix C** to this document.

Develop your school's graduated response

Having a graduated response enables you to have a clear and consistent early intervention response to absence as it first emerges. The starting point for any intervention should be to first identify any barriers to attendance and put in support to address those. When engagement is proving challenging schools should then look to escalate the interventions, including using legal interventions. Fixed penalty notices can be effective as an early legal intervention. Schools should develop a graduated response that match the approach in their policy and improvement plan.

A model graduated approach can be found in **Appendix C**, which schools use as an example or template to adapt from.

Define your school's 'support first' offer

Schools are expected to have a 'support first' approach to improving attendance. You should define what is your school's approach to support and develop an attendance support provision map. This should sit as part of your in-school ordinarily available provision and align with your approach for medical needs, safeguarding, SEND and wellbeing. Defining this will enable you to set out how you respond to attendance.

This should then align with the LA family help support offer and be clear about when you may need to seek external support or utilise legal enforcement measures.

The reasons a child is not attending school are not always a standalone issue and can often be a sign of issues elsewhere that need to be addressed. Therefore, in implementing a 'support first' approach school's need to listen to parents/carers and children to understand the reason for absence. Without understanding the underlying

reasons, it will be harder to identify the appropriate support or interventions that are required to secure an improvement.

The underlying reason for absence can often be found in four areas, which are:

- **Pupil centred** – the pupil either has special educational needs that are not being appropriately met, have school related anxiety, or have a physical or mental health ill health, which means they are struggling to access education.
- **School centred** – there are issues relating to the school environment, the curriculum or relationship issues with teachers or other staff in the school that are causing them to not attend regularly. This may lead to school related anxiety.
- **Parent/carer centred** – there may have been changes in family circumstances such as financial hardship, bereavement, parental ill health (including parental mental health) that means the child is a young carer and/or the parent/carer is not prioritising regular school attendance. This means that they will struggle to ensure regular attendance without family support interventions.
- **Community/peer centred** – the input of peers or the wider community (both in the person and on social media) are leading to the child not attending regularly. This may be a result of bullying, or the child being involved with a negative peer group, including involvement with or exploitation by gangs.

Identifying the underlying reasons will then help schools identify the intervention or support required to improve attendance.

Possible interventions for each area are:

Pupil	• Assessing for possible SEND and implementing any reasonable adjustments. • For medical needs develop an Individual Healthcare Plan. • Consult school nurse.
School	• Identifying mentor/key person in school to support. • Reviewing the child's timetable to address any issues identified such as changing subjects or classes. • Restorative meetings to repair relationships with staff.
Parent/carer	• Referring to Family Help for family support. • Refer to voluntary and community sector services that can support. • Discuss with ACOS appropriateness of legal interventions. • If child at risk of significant harm refer to Children's Social Care

Peer/community	• Address bullying through school's policies including through restorative meetings with peers. • Peer mentoring and friendship groups. • Extra-curricular activities. • External mentoring. • Specialist extra-familial risk services. If at risk of significant harm refer to Children's Social Care.
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Understand Emotionally Based School Avoidance

Emotionally based school avoidance (EBSA) is not a medical condition, and it is perfectly usual for children to feel anxious at times. Whilst there are a very small number of children who have a severe mental health condition and will need support from specialist services, such as Education Psychologists, for the main part anxiety can be address by understanding what is making the child feel anxious and address those. These are the product of friendship issues or learning issues both of which schools can help children with.

When a child's attendance starts to drop their friendships start to loosen and they start to fall behind in their learning. This understandably leads to them to feel anxious about having no friends and not knowing what is happening in the classroom. This is why intervening early is critical to address any issues early. Avoiding school can make that anxiety worse as the issues feel bigger and therefore become more entrenched.

If a parent is reporting that their child is anxious, they should work with them and the child to understand why they are feeling anxious. They should then help them to rebuild and establish a friendship group and support them to reconnect confidently with their learning. Successfully doing that will help reduce a child's anxiety and give them the confidence to start attending school again. This does not require specialist external interventions but draws upon providing the relational and academic support that schools are experienced at doing.

More entrenched cases this will be harder and take longer. They may also require more adaptations, but the process for overcoming this is the same. Schools should identify the reasons why the child is not attending school and look to rebuild their confidence so they can be in school and learning every day.

Use the Shared Perspectives Tool (SPT) can help you identify the reasons for absence if these are not easily identified.

The Shared Perspectives Tool (SPT)

Camden Learning has worked with developer schools to create a Shared Perspectives Tool (or SPT) to assist schools to identify the underlying reasons for absence. The SPT consists of separate teacher, parent and pupil surveys and aims to identify what each feel is working well for the pupil in school and what is working less well.

Obtaining the different perspectives on why a child is absent enables a shared understanding to be developed and the right underlying reasons and the interventions that are most likely to be impactful identified. This can then inform your pupil attendance improvement plan.

To find out more about the Shared Perspectives Tool (SPT) speak to your SISO, who will be able to support you to implement it in your school.

Engage with parents/carers and pupils

It is important that that expectations are communicated clearly to parents/carers and pupils. They should also be reminded of this expectation and updated on performance, both individually and collectively, regularly.

The DfE's toolkit on communicating with parents/carers about attendance can be accessed at [Toolkit for schools: communicating with families to support attendance - GOV.UK](#).

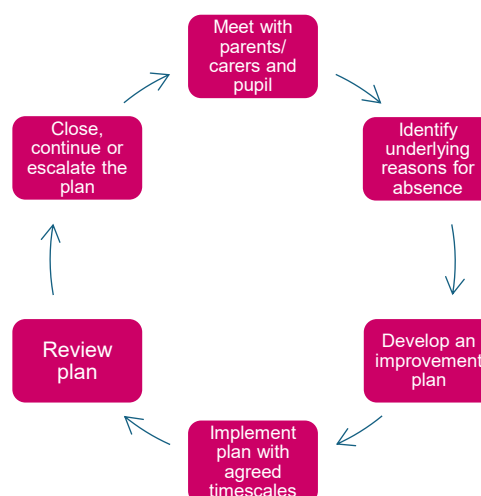
Adopt the following approaches when considering your engagement with parents/carers and pupils:

- Ensure the leadership is visible proactively building positive relationships with parents/carers and pupils. Consider the school's approach to how good news is shared and achievement recognised alongside when issues arise.
- Focus on 'support-first' with parents/carers, pupils and staff. Create time to ensure that the needs and barriers of high-risk pupils are understood and shared by all members of the senior team.
- Shift from using attendance percentages to **days missed and activities missed** when discussing absence. EEF evidence shows this is more effective at ensuring parents/carers understand the amount of school missed.
- Prioritise meetings, and if possible, home visits, to identify and unblock barriers to attendance when it first drops below 95%.

- Develop systems for ensuring **welcome back** greetings for pupils when returning from absence, recognising that they were away from school.
- Set out attendance expectations clearly in the home-school agreement
- Provide a copy of your attendance policy to parents/carers (either the full version or by creating a parent/carer friendly version) at least annually.
- Ensure the following information can easily be found on your website
 - Your attendance policy
 - Your term dates
 - Start of the school day information
 - How good attendance will be celebrated
 - Your approach to illness absence and granting leave of absence
 - What parents/carers need to do if their child is going to be absent
 - How parents/carers and pupils can access support
 - What will happen if a child is absent for too many days
- Regularly update parents/carers and pupils on school/class/year attendance
- Update parents/carers regularly on how many **days** out of the 190, their own child has missed
- Utilise text messaging to inform parents when absences are noted, or when attendance is strong. The **Behavioural Insights Team's guide to using parent text messages** to improve attendance can be found at [Increasing attendance with parent messages - Supportive 'how-to' guide for schools | BIT](#)

Where needed develop a pupil attendance improvement plan

When attendance falls below 85%, schools should consider adopting a more formalised casework approach to improvement by developing a pupil attendance improvement plan with agreed interventions and targets.



Adopting a '**Plan-Do-Review**' model will help ensure plans do not drift and remain focused on improving a child's attendance. Plans should include timescales for actions and targets that set out the expected improvement in attendance.

How Camden Learning is supporting you to improve your attendance

You are not alone! Camden Learning has an extensive support offer that schools can draw upon as they work to improve their attendance. This includes:

- Advice and guidance from your Camden Professional Partner (CPP) and your School Inclusion Support Officer (SISO)
- Attendance Update monthly newsletter
- Regular School Attendance data analysis booklets
- Attendance resource banks
- Posters
- Training
- Attendance Network meetings
- Termly Targeted Support Meetings (TSMs)
- Legal interventions

Camden Learning's School Inclusion Support Officers (SISOs)

Each school will have a named SISO who will act as a first point of contact for providing support with advice, and guidance on a range of school inclusion matters such as:

- School attendance (including persistent absentees)
- Pupils at risk of suspension/exclusion
- Children missing from education
- Part time/reduced timetables.

Targeted Support Meeting (TSM) will be held on at least termly basis with all, though in priority schools this may be more frequently.

You should discuss with your SISO any pupils who are persistently and severely absent from school or at risk of becoming so. This can be in your TSM or if more urgent when a concern arises. They will agree any actions with you.

Whilst they do not have the capacity to undertake casework, they can assist you with identifying possible solutions and help you navigate the range of early help and statutory interventions that are available.

They can also provide you with advice, support and guidance on the implementation of your action plan.

Need further advice?

If you want further advice in the first instance speak to:

Ed Magee, Team Manager

Ed.Magee@camdenlearning.org.uk

or

Chris Roberts, Senior Adviser Safeguarding & Inclusion

Chris.Roberts@camdenlearning.org.uk

Appendix A - Roles and responsibilities

Improving attendance is a whole school responsibility, with leadership coming from the top. If it's something you expect your attendance officer to do alone then you will fail. Headteachers should ensure all staff understand the part they play in improving your school's attendance. Consider adding this to their performance objectives.

Headteacher

- Have high expectations for attendance, and ensure staff, pupils and parents/carers are aware of these and the part they play. Ensuring that your policy is implemented consistently across the school.
- Set challenging targets to at least meet national averages for the school overall, and improve the school's similar schools ranking, and devise an attendance improvement strategy that focuses on improving the attendance of all pupils whose attendance falls below between 95% and has clear success criteria.
- Ensure complete clarity over the roles and responsibilities that are held by staff, and that they are regularly reminded of the part they play. Appoint a member of SLT as Attendance Lead to lead on attendance management, training, and monitoring, but then ensure that attendance approaches and impact are regularly discussed by the wider senior team, setting aside sufficient time to analyse data, discuss pupils and agree actions
- Take a critical eye to the systems and processes, and regularly evaluate how well they are being enacted by staff
- Seek to learn from similar schools that have better attendance
- Create a welcoming approach that enables children and parents/carers to discuss any concerns that have or support they may need. Seek to understand pupil voice and experience, set a culture where belonging is fostered. Welcome pupils into school in the morning and ensure pupils any pupils who were absent know they were missed in school.
- Use reports on attendance at whole school, year group and class level to hold other leaders (and yourself) to account.
- Enable attendance leads and officers to be released to attend attendance networks and training.
- Report on the impact of your policy and improvement plan to governors as part of the termly report. Consider whether a link governor for attendance role is needed.

Attendance Lead/Champion

- Work with the Headteacher to agree on relevant internal attendance targets and develop a school-wide strategy.
- Monitor attendance weekly at school, year group, class, and individual levels and evaluate progress towards the targets, sharing findings systematically with the wider school staff.
- Ensure consistent implementation of the attendance policy and improvement plan through checking how it is being applied at all levels, and the impact that it is having.
- Provide training and CPD opportunities for staff, emphasising the role they play, and seek to learn from schools that are achieving better attendance.
- Liaise with Camden Learning, the Camden Council and other external agencies.
- Quickly and proactively identify all children whose attendance drops below 95% and take rapid steps to contact parents, acknowledge absence, and improve their attendance.
- Make systematic use of reward systems, assemblies, parents' evenings, performance reviews, etc and ensure that these systems are understood and routinely enacted by all staff
- Line manage the school's attendance officer, ensuring registers are checked and updated daily, with the required action taken at each threshold level.
- Ensure all staff take registers on time and accurately and follow up any concerns.
- Advise the appropriate senior leader of any teacher who fails to maintain the register properly
- Agree threshold for referrals for legal intervention measures (e.g. FPNs) and ensure these are applied robustly and systematically.

Attendance Officer

- Routinely follow the school's procedures for first day calling.
- Speak directly to parent/carers to discuss reasons for absence and agree return dates. Keep a log of contact made.
- Meet at least weekly with the Attendance Lead to ensure children whose attendance is starting to drop below 95% are identified early for intervention and support.
- Ensure the school's approach is having impact and suggest areas for improvement.
- Provide regular data to class teachers, Head of Year/Phase and the Attendance Lead and discuss theme and barriers to attendance.

- Make sure the Attendance Lead and/or the Headteacher know about families where attendance is concern.
- Work with the Head of Year/Phase or Pastoral lead to issue attendance letters or contact in line with the attendance policy and your graduated attendance strategy.
- Check reasons for absence and ensure that details are reflected appropriately through categorisation of absence in the registers.
- Routinely check absence coding for errors.
- Ensure any messages from parents/carers to the class teacher or other relevant members of staff are shared promptly.
- Where appropriate, undertake home visits to meet with parents/carers.

Form tutors/class teachers

- Create a welcoming classroom environment, where pupils feel safe, seen and valued. Seek to understand their individuality and interests. Notice when things are done well, or attendance improves.
- Following absence, make time to speak with pupils to welcome them back, acknowledge they were missed and discuss missed learning.
- Make a personal connection with parents of pupils who have regular absences, or patterns of irregular attendance.
- Record attendance daily, using the correct codes. Do not leave blanks in the register. Seek advice from the Attendance Lead or Officer if not sure.
- Know and follow the Attendance Policy and work with pupils and parents where there are concerns about their attendance.
- Ensure the Headteacher or Attendance Lead is informed of concerns over attendance. Inform the Designated Safeguarding Lead if there are concerns about the child's welfare or wellbeing.
- Engage with training provided and will seek guidance if unsure about the role and responsibilities.

Heads of Year/Heads of Phase/Pastoral Leads

- Know the current absence data for your cohort, and individual and cohorts who are at risk of absence. Ensure this is also shared and known by class teachers.
- Meet with parents/carers when attendance first drops below 96%, remind them of why regular attendance is important and see if any support is required.

- Know and implement the attendance policy consistently, ensuring that the same is true for colleagues. Check in and support.
- Remove barriers to attendance by putting in place any support that pupils may need to attend regularly.
- Ensure pupils feel safe in school and address any friendships issues early.
- Devise and review attendance improvement action plans for persistently and severely absent pupils in collaboration with the attendance lead.
- Where appropriate, undertake home visits to meet with parents/carers.
- Meet at least weekly with the attendance lead to discuss pupils of concern

Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENDCO)

- For pupils with SEND, communicate with the local authority where a pupil's attendance falls, or you become aware of additional barriers to attendance that relate to the pupil's needs.
- Implement reasonable adjustments to policies and practices that are consistent with the special educational provision in collaboration with parents.
- Ensure that a pupil's attendance is part of every conversation about a child.
- Work with the local authority to review and amend EHCPs where appropriate.

Designed Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

- Have oversight of all pupils who are severely absent or are at risk of becoming so
- Make referrals to Children's Social Care or Family Help services where it appropriate to do so.
- Ensure that key staff attendance officers / office staff / class teachers / tutors are aware of who are vulnerable pupils and update the list as it changes. If there is a concern about a vulnerable child's attendance, ensure there are robust systems so that it is noticed and challenged quickly.
- Ensure that a pupil's attendance is part of every conversation about a child.

Office staff

- Ensure you are familiar with the school's attendance policy and the relevant senior staff to contact for advice and guidance.
- Take calls from parents and carers about absence and record it on the school system. Using the schools agreed script, encourage attendance whenever appropriate and agree return dates.

- Ensure that messages or concerns related to attendance are shared quickly to the appropriate staff.
- Remind parents/carers about the school's attendance expectations whenever a child is absent.

Governing body

- **Promote a Strong Culture:** Ensure attendance is embedded in the school's ethos and policies, consistently conveying to students and families the impact of absence on attainment and well-being.
- **Scrutinise Data:** Regularly review attendance and persistent absence data at board meetings, paying special attention to vulnerable cohorts (e.g., pupils with special educational needs, disadvantaged students, or those absent due to medical/mental health issues).
- **Monitor Statutory Duties:** Make sure the senior leadership team strictly adheres to government guidelines (such as the DfE's *Working together to improve school attendance*) and ensure all school staff receive adequate training.
- **Support and Challenge Leaders:** Ask robust questions of school leaders regarding attendance trends, intervention methods for students struggling to attend, and the effectiveness of current strategies. Agree the attendance policy, targets and improvement priorities.

Appendix B – Weekly Attendance Action Meeting (Template)

Date of meeting:

Attendees:

Pupil name	Class/Form	Current attendance %	Barrier to attendance	Agreed action(s)	Timescale	Responsible person	Review date

Appendix C – Persistent Absence Tracker (Template)

Each half term check point record the name of pupils who are either at risk (90%-95%) or on course to (below 90%) be PA for the year.

Interventions should then be taken to ensure that come off the list at the next PA check point.

Once a pupil has missed 38+ sessions (19 days) move them to the final column as they will have attendance lower the 90% for the year and be PA.

Autumn half term		End of autumn term		Spring half term		End of Spring term		Summer half term		End of year
At risk 4+ sessions	On course 8+ sessions	At risk 8+ sessions	On course 14+ sessions	At risk 10+ sessions	On course 20+ sessions	At risk 14+ sessions	On course 26+ sessions	At risk 16+ sessions	On course 32+ sessions	Already PA 38+ sessions

Appendix D – Model graduated response

Stage	Actions	Descriptor	Attendance %	Days missed	Sessions missed	Engagement
Celebrate & sustain	- Celebrate individual and class good attendance - Thank parents/carers - Remind about expectations	Excellent	100%	0	0	Letter thanking them for good attendance
			99%	2	4	
		Very good	98%	4	8	
		Good	97%	6	12	
			96%	8	16	
Engage	- Add to monitoring list - Discuss at weekly meeting - Contact parent to discuss concerns & any support - Class/form teacher support for pupil	At risk of PA, action required	95%	9	18	Letter to highlight concern and invite to discuss support
			94%	11	22	
			93%	13	26	
			92%	15	30	
			91%	17	34	
Escalate	- Notify parents that attendance is below 90% - Use Shared Perspective Tool (SPT) to identify barriers to attendance - Offer Family Help referral to parents - Warn PN is possible - Consider requiring evidence to authorise further absence - Seek SISO advice - Weekly HOY/ Pastoral Lead pupil mentoring - Devise a plan, do, review improvement plan	On track to be PA	90%	19	38	Invite to meeting to discuss and reasons for absence and develop and improvement plan
			89%	21	42	
			88%	23	46	
			87%	25	50	
			86%	27	54	
	- Invite parents to formal meeting with Attendance Lead. Possible include SISO - Agree improvement contract with targets and 4-week monitoring period - Make referrals for support - Issue Notice to Improve	Serious cause for concern	85%	28	56	Review plan, consider further support or issue Notice to Improve
			84%	30	60	
			83%	32	64	
			82%	34	68	
			81%	36	72	
Refer	- Review improvement plan - Discuss with DSL - Refer for legal intervention (e.g. FPN), MASH or AP	At risk of SA	80% and below	38	76	Consider what escalation is needed



Camden Learning is a schools-led partnership between Camden schools and Camden Council, established in 2017 to drive improvement through collective expertise. Guided by values of excellence and social equity, we support teachers, leaders and support staff in their work. Our collaborative model helps schools take shared responsibility for outcomes, ensuring every child and young person in Camden benefits from high-quality, inclusive education.