

# Bracknell Forest Attendance Strategy 2025 - 2028



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# Foreword

We are pleased to introduce Bracknell Forest's new School Attendance Strategy. Bracknell Forest and its partners fully recognise the importance of strong, consistent school attendance in helping children and young people achieve their full potential. This strategy is aligned with the national Working Together to Improve School Attendance statutory guidance and reflects our shared commitment to a clear, coordinated approach that places the needs of children and families at its heart.

This strategy sets out our collective vision and approach to improving attendance across all our schools. It reinforces our belief that education is a shared responsibility, one that involves schools, families, services, and the wider community. Improving attendance requires early action, a compassionate understanding of individual circumstances and a joined-up response across the system.

We understand there are often complex and varied reasons why a child may be absent from school. That is why this strategy focuses on early identification, removing barriers and providing targeted support to help families engage positively with education. By working together, we can make sure every child can attend, engage and succeed in school.

I am proud of the collaborative efforts that have shaped this strategy, and I extend my thanks to all those who have contributed, from school leaders and professionals to partner organisations and families. Together, we will work to build a culture of strong attendance, raise aspirations and improve outcomes for all children and young people in Bracknell Forest.

**Cllr. Dr Roy Bailey**

Executive lead member for children and young people



# What is the strategy for?

On 6 May 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) released new guidance [Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)<sup>1</sup> to help schools, trusts, governing bodies and local authorities (LAs) maintain high levels of school attendance and improve consistency of support.

Our strategy defines our commitment to working with schools, and other partners, to improve school attendance and punctuality across Bracknell Forest. Underpinning this commitment is the understanding there is a strong correlation between good school attendance and achieving positive outcomes for children and young people.

Securing good attendance cannot be achieved in isolation. Effective practices for improvement a concerted effort across all teaching and non-teaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners.

Bracknell Forest acknowledge pupils with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) are disproportionately affected by attendance issues and face greater barriers to consistent school participation.

This strategy is also applicable to where arrangements have been made for pupils to attend provisions other than a registered school.

The strategy has been developed with the aim of supporting the LA, schools, other partner agencies and key stakeholders to determine how to work together more efficiently and effectively with existing resources. It also looks to identify ways to streamline our work processes and maximise the use of resources to make sure that:

- All children and young people (CYP) attending school are provided with crucial opportunities to develop academically, socially and personally, leading to improved health, wellbeing, and future success.
- Systems are developed by the local authority with accurate and contemporaneous data. Data is used to identify patterns, trends and systems that are responsive to those supporting schools to intervene early and prevent escalation of concerns.
- Rigorously track local attendance data to develop a strategic approach to attendance that prioritises the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.
- Through adequate training and guidance, the workforce understands the LA's responsibilities for school attendance and they know who to contact for support. Staff know the legislation, guidance, local policies and procedures, and are confident to address concerns about school attendance. Responses to concerns about pupils' absence at an individual, institutional and local level are coordinated across teams. Schools, parents and children are clear about what support is on offer as well as their responsibilities.

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<sup>1</sup> [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)



## Who is the strategy for?

- All school and academy trust staff, including headteachers, governors, academy trustees and alternative provision providers.
- Local authority education and attendance staff, early help professionals, children's social care staff and virtual school heads.
- Statutory safeguarding (including police and integrated care boards) and other local partners including the youth justice team.
- Parent/carers

## The local context

- The Children and Young People Plan sets out the shared vision of being ambitious about education. The plan includes priority actions for the partnership.
- The Early Help Strategy 2023 – 2025, developed by the local partnership, in conjunction with families, sets out the vision for early help in Bracknell Forest and provides the ambitious framework for delivery.
- The Bracknell Forest Council Plan 2023-2027 sets out our borough's ambition that children have quality education and opportunities to fulfill their potential.
- The Learning Improvement Strategy sets out the key priorities within Bracknell Forest for improving outcomes for children and young people.
- Safeguarding children thresholds guidance 2023-2023 provides a framework for professionals who are working with children, young people, and families, and aims to help identify circumstances when children may need additional support to achieve their full potential.
- The Youth Justice Plan 2024-2027 sets out our aspirations for the next three years to prevent offending and re-offending by children, as well as looking back at what we have achieved over the last year.



## 2023/24 Attendance data

2023/24	All mainstream schools			
	Overall attendance	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence	Persistent absence (90% or below)
<b>Bracknell Forest</b>	<b>93.3%</b>	<b>4.8%</b>	<b>1.8%</b>	<b>18.4%</b>
Primary school	95.1%	3.7%	1.1%	11.5%
Secondary school	91.5%	6.0%	2.6%	25.4%
<b>Southeast region</b>	<b>92.8%</b>	<b>5.1%</b>	<b>2.1%</b>	<b>20.1%</b>
Primary school	94.5%	4.1%	1.4%	14.3%
Secondary school	90.9%	6.0%	3.0%	26.6%
<b>Nationally</b>	<b>92.8%</b>	<b>4.7%</b>	<b>2.5%</b>	<b>20.7%</b>
Primary school	94.4%	3.9%	1.6%	15.2%
Secondary school	90.9%	5.5%	3.6%	26.7%

There are 44 schools in Bracknell Forest, of which 24 are state-maintained schools, 13 academies, six independent and one special school.

From 19 August 2024, all schools must share their attendance data with the DfE which will give schools, local authorities, and academy trusts access to more up-to-date pupil-level attendance data. This will allow easy identification of pupils requiring support and facilitates greater working together whilst also helping to identify trends across pupil groups, schools, local areas and nationally enables efforts and strategies to be targeted.

Bracknell Forest has access to 'live' data from all schools which will enable the LA to make fully informed strategic decisions and provide leadership in attendance across the area. Attendance data for 2023/24 reveals that Bracknell Forest exceeds both national and regional averages in primary and secondary school attendance. Despite this achievement, we remain committed to higher aspirations for our children and young people, especially given the ongoing challenges in national attendance statistics since the COVID-19 pandemic. Our attendance strategy is designed to continually enhance attendance for all children through a collaborative, multiagency approach.



Other outcomes in 2023-24 include:

- We were above the provisional national average in the early years foundation stage (EYFS)
- Very slightly above national in Year 1 phonics
- Broadly in line with outcomes at the end of Key Stage 2.
- Disadvantaged pupils do not achieve as well as their peers nationally. There is a gap between disadvantaged pupils and non-disadvantaged pupils at every key stage.
- High prior attaining pupils across the borough at all key stages could do better given their starting points.
- As of July 2024, 100 per cent of schools in Bracknell Forest were rated good or better by Ofsted, ranking Bracknell Forest fifth out of 164 local authorities nationally, against this measure.

## What do we want to achieve?

### Our vision

All children and young people within Bracknell Forest have access to quality education and opportunities to enable them to fulfil their potential.

### Our mission

To improve school attendance across Bracknell Forest schools and ensure that children and young people receive support at the earliest opportunity, with the right people involved, at the right time.



# Why is good attendance important?

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have.

Being in school is important to children's achievement, wellbeing, and wider development. Being around teachers and friends in a school or college environment is the best way for most pupils to learn and reach their potential. If children are in school, then they are visible to professionals, and we know that they are safe and provided with access to extra-curricular opportunities and pastoral care.

We all have high aspirations for the children and young people in Bracknell Forest. We want them to enjoy life in the borough and beyond, to achieve well, and 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. Children are best supported by those who already have a relationship with them, such as schools, who can organise additional support with local partners as needed. The expertise of our schools and a wide range of agencies, including the voluntary and community sector, is invaluable.

The barriers to accessing education are wide and complex, both within and beyond the school gates, and are often specific to individual pupils and families. The foundation of securing good attendance is that school is a calm, orderly, safe, and supportive environment, where all pupils want to join and are keen and ready to learn. Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

School is not just about academic success and attainment. It is also centered on learning about the world, about relationships and about individuals. It is about trying new things, making new friends, and finding a place in the world. To miss school is to miss the multifaceted experiences that shape the choices we make, the opportunities we have and the quality of life that we lead.

For pupils with SEND, consistent attendance is even more crucial. Missed sessions can disrupt carefully planned learning sequences, delay progress towards EHCP outcomes and negatively impact their access to specialist support and therapies.

Attendance is a key protective factor and offers the best chance to identify children's needs and provide support, which helps safeguard them from harm and ensures they can access the resources necessary to address any challenges.



## Who is responsible for ensuring good attendance?

The parent of every child of compulsory school age is required to make sure their child receives efficient full-time education that is suitable to their age, ability, and aptitude, as well as any special educational needs (in the case of a child within the jurisdiction of a local authority in England). This education may be provided through regular school attendance or through other means. It is the responsibility of the parent or carer to ensure that their child is enrolled in a school and attends regularly and punctually, receiving education that meets their individual needs.

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

While parents/carers have the primary responsibility, the LA recognises that parents of children with SEND may face additional barriers to ensuring regular attendance and will provide tailored support and guidance.

School attendance is everyone's business, and several stakeholders are involved in helping to ensure good attendance, for example the education welfare team at the LA, children's social care and health care professionals.



# What are our roles?



## The role of parents/carers and pupils

### Parents and carers are asked to:

- Make sure their child attends school regularly and on time unless there is a valid reason for absence which is agreed with the school's headteacher.
- Work closely with the school and LA to resolve any issues when attendance problems occur.
- Comply with their roles and responsibilities as outlined in the school attendance policy.
- Mandatory school attendance. No holidays during term time.
- Discuss and resolve any issues surrounding their child's attendance with members of school staff.
- Make sure that their child continues to attend their current school until a place is available at another school if a transfer has been requested.
- Follow and support the schools safeguarding policy, making sure communication is effective and timely when reporting any absences.

### Children and young people are asked to:

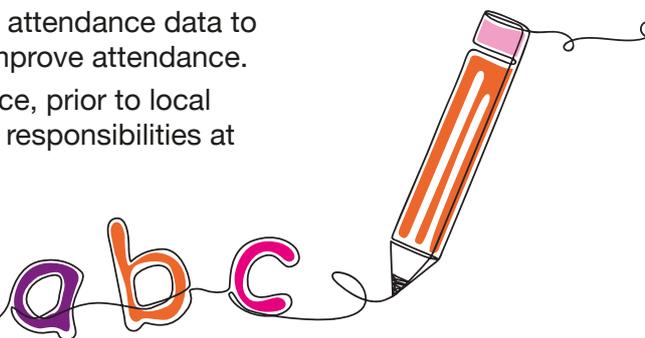
- Attend school regularly and punctually, in accordance with the agreed timetable.
- Stay in school for the school day, unless arrangements are agreed with the school.
- Arrive at school in the correct uniform and equipped for the school day.
- Follow the school rules.



## The role of schools and academies



- Have a whole-school ethos that reinforces good attendance.
- Set annual targets for attendance and monitor progress towards them.
- Track and monitor attendance to ensure early intervention is put in place, including those specifically of a safeguarding nature.
- Appoint a member of the senior leadership team to take strategic responsibility for attendance and ensure all school staff are clear about their individual responsibilities and accountabilities in relation to attendance.
- Make sure staff receive appropriate training and development opportunities in relation to attendance.
- 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.
- Contact parents on the first day of absence.
- Take appropriate action and inform the LA when any pupil is absent for 10 consecutive days, where their absence has been recorded with one or more of the codes statistically classified as unauthorised.
- Clearly communicate their attendance policy to all staff, pupils, and parents
- Make sure parents/carers are supported in promoting the regular and punctual attendance of their children.
- Provide easily accessible 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.
- Make sure 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.



- Provide learning materials/opportunities where a child is absent that are regularly assessed and marked where a child is unable to attend school.
- Make sure an individual health care plan is put into place to effectively support a pupil with medical conditions that may impact on school attendance.
- For those pupils who have a social worker and/or a youth justice worker, if there are any unauthorised absences, suspensions, or the potential of a permanent exclusion, inform children's social care and any other professionals, as appropriate.
- Identify pupils with SEND at risk of poor attendance early, using data from EHCP reviews, SEND support plans, and teacher observations.
- Make reasonable adjustments to the school environment, curriculum, and policies to meet the individual needs of pupils with SEND and remove barriers to attendance. This may include adjustments to timetables, sensory breaks, access to quiet spaces, or modified learning materials.
- Develop individual attendance plans for pupils with SEND who have persistent attendance issues. These plans should be created in collaboration with the pupil, parents/carers, the SENCo, and any relevant external agencies. Plans should identify specific barriers, set realistic targets, outline support strategies, and include regular review dates.
- Ensure all staff, including teaching assistants and support staff, receive training on understanding the specific attendance challenges faced by pupils with SEND and how to implement effective support strategies. This should include training on specific conditions such as autism, ADHD and anxiety and how they might impact attendance.
- Pay close attention to attendance patterns after any transitions. These periods (end of the school day, between lessons, between key stages) can be points of difficulty. Provide additional support during transition periods.

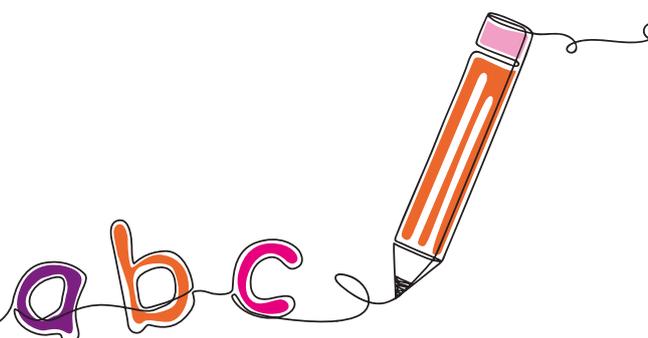
## The role of the LA



- Our belief that regular and punctual attendance is key to academic and social development underpins the local authority's procedures for managing attendance. We will continue to develop partnership working ensuring that attendance is on everyone's agenda.
- 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.

### The local authority will:

- Hold multi-agency meetings and help create action plans with schools and relevant services for those children with very low attendance.
- Meet with schools' attendance champions to review policies, data, and best practice.
- Offer 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 and youth justice worker.
- Provide specialist advice, guidance, and support to schools, parents, and pupils with SEND on attendance-related issues. This may include conducting attendance audits, offering training, and providing access to specialist services.
- Ensure that attendance is a standing item on the agenda for all EHCP annual reviews and that any attendance concerns are addressed through the review process, with clear actions and responsibilities identified."
- Monitor attendance data specifically for pupils with SEND, disaggregating data by type of need and provision, to identify trends and target support effectively.
- Support schools to ensure they can gather enough evidence to move to legal intervention where needed.
- Identify children who are not receiving an education.
- Ensure our statutory duties for school attendance are fulfilled.
- Design and deliver a communications campaign to raise the profile of school attendance across all stakeholders.
- Share good practice.





## The role of other agencies and stakeholders



### Early years

Whilst attendance in early years settings before the age of five is not statutory, early years is where lifelong habits are established. Even for very young children, there are positive benefits to be gained from regular attendance, whatever the weekly pattern of childcare or schooling. This includes not only coming to every planned session but also being there on time. 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.

### Virtual school

The virtual school will monitor attendance for children looked after (CLA) and provide specific advice and bespoke support to help improve the attendance for this cohort of children regardless of whether they are placed in or out of borough. Where the attendance of a CLA is a cause for concern or appears to be falling, the virtual school education support officer will contact schools, carers, and social workers to explore the cause for absence and discuss next steps. Stakeholders are equally advised to contact the virtual school should they have any concerns regarding attendance for CLA. The virtual school offers training to designated teachers to support them in the role of raising and monitoring the attendance of CLA and previously looked after children (P-CLA).

From September 2024, the virtual school head role has been extended to promote practice that supports the attendance and engagement of kinship children in education.

For children with a social worker (CWSW), the virtual school will ensure that an attendance monitoring system (Studybugs) is in place for social care to be able to track the attendance of this cohort of children.

### 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 support families during their 1-1 interventions to support transition, working with the school staff to ensure a positive start, which includes good attendance. Similarly, they will support with transition to new schools and when moving from a primary to secondary setting. During whole family work, schools and educational staff are invited to team around the family (TAF) meetings for all children open to early help where attendance is monitored, and smart actions included in the support plan where attendance is a concern.

### Health services

The school nursing service is available to all children in Bracknell Forest schools. The school nurses can support with the delivery of health promotion reflecting local and national priorities in collaboration with the Bracknell Forest public health team, supporting the local whole-school health promotion approach through the healthy school's programme. The school nursing team delivers training within schools for the following medical conditions and management of severe allergic reactions, asthma and epilepsy enabling these children to attend and remain in school. Their role in attendance can often be key and the local authority engage with the services on a regular basis. The local authority recognise that many families rely on these services to maintain good levels of attendance.

Health visitors also play a vital role in supporting school attendance in early years settings by providing families with resources, guidance, and interventions that promote children's wellbeing and encourage regular participation in educational activities.

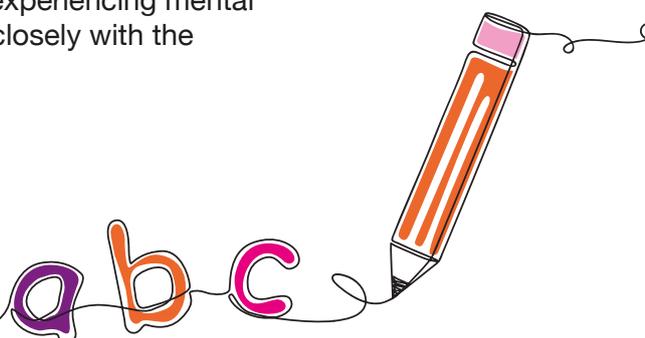
### Youth justice team

The youth justice team, work with children primarily to prevent and divert them from entering the criminal justice system but also by supporting some children not to re-offend. Youth justice professionals understand the strong link between poor attendance at school and children becoming involved in offending, anti-social behaviour, and exploitation. Youth justice case workers and specialists play a crucial role in identifying and addressing barriers to attendance, including unidentified learning, behavioural and mental health needs and communicating them to the school and other involved professionals through the youth justice education meeting and other multi agency forums Youth justice case workers and specialists promote the importance of school attendance to both parents and children and offer parenting support and signposting to other support services.

### Mental health support teams (MHST)

The mental health support team (MHST) helps children and young people (ages five to 18) who are experiencing emerging, mild, or moderate mental health challenges that may impact their daily lives.

The MHST will prioritise support for pupils with SEND who are experiencing mental health challenges that are impacting their attendance, working closely with the school's SENCo and other relevant professionals



As a new initiative, this service is currently available to 14 participating schools in Bracknell. They offer the following to selected schools:

- Interventions for young people facing mild to moderate mental health difficulties.
- Staff surgeries.
- Mental health network meetings.
- Training for staff and support in promoting emotional wellbeing and mental health within schools.
- Peer mentoring.
- Online resources and peer support for parents/carers and professionals, available through digital platforms like SHaRON, focused on emotional wellbeing and mental health.

### **Economic disadvantage**

All partners must recognise the challenges faced by families and students experiencing economic disadvantage and work collaboratively to address and overcome the barriers this creates to regular school attendance. Factors such as limited access to reliable transport, especially in areas with inadequate or non-existent public transport options, as well as issues like food insecurity or inadequate heating at home, can create multiple barriers for these families. These challenges often lead to disrupted routines, lateness, and inconsistent attendance, which in turn affect the child's overall educational experience.

Schools should also show an understanding in these situations, implementing strategies to support students who may arrive late, hungry, or cold, ensuring that they are welcomed with compassion and without drawing attention to their circumstances in front of peers.

Schools should also engage parents in proactive problem-solving, while remaining alert to signs of non-compliance, which may indicate broader issues such as educational neglect.

To address these challenges, schools should effectively utilise funding, such as pupil premium, to support economically disadvantaged students. Additionally, schools should connect with local organisations and partners, such as Bracknell Forest Housing, to make sure families facing financial difficulties receive the support they need.

When designing educational offers, the LA may consider levels of deprivation in specific schools or areas to tailor resources and support, addressing the needs of those most affected by economic disadvantage in Bracknell Forest.

At the heart of this approach is the recognition that education is one of the most powerful tools for breaking cycles of disadvantage, opening doors to opportunity, and improving life chances. Ensuring that every child, regardless of background, has full access to education is key to fostering social mobility and long-term success.



### Special educational needs and disabilities (SEND)

Children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities (SEND) often experience more severe and persistent absence from school compared to their peers. This is due to a variety of factors, including medical conditions, as well as social, emotional, and mental health challenges that can impact their attendance. We are committed to understanding these challenges more deeply and continually improving our approach to supporting SEND students.

SEND students, including those with education, health, and care plans (EHCPs), benefit from regular, documented reviews conducted by their schools, as well as input from the LA's SEND services, and partners such as health and social care. These reviews involve parents, carers, and the students themselves, providing an opportunity to address and document attendance issues on an ongoing basis. For SEND students, regular attendance is even more critical, especially if they require specialist support and are working below age-related expectations for their learning.

In Bracknell Forest, we recognise the vulnerability of SEND students and are committed to ensuring that all SEND documentation and procedures prioritise attendance. These documents will include sections specifically focused on attendance, with discussions, targets, and joint actions to remove barriers to regular attendance. For students with EHCPs, attendance will be a key topic at annual reviews and discussed more frequently as needed.

### Young carers

Supporting the school attendance of young carers is a key priority for Bracknell Forest Council, as we recognise the unique challenges, they face in balancing their caregiving responsibilities with their education. Many young carers experience difficulties attending school regularly due to their home responsibilities, which can affect their academic progress and wellbeing. To support these young people, the L A is committed to working closely with schools, families, and support services to ensure they have the flexibility and resources they need to thrive. This includes offering tailored support such as flexible school hours, access to additional learning resources, and emotional support through school-based services. By fostering strong communication between schools, social services, and families, we can help young carers maintain consistent attendance and succeed academically, while also addressing their caregiving needs. We are dedicated to ensuring that young carers have every opportunity to reach their full potential and achieve their educational goals.



# Our four priorities

Our four priorities will inform a detailed multi-agency action plan, that will set out specific actions, the actions we will take to achieve the overarching priorities and the deliverable dates.

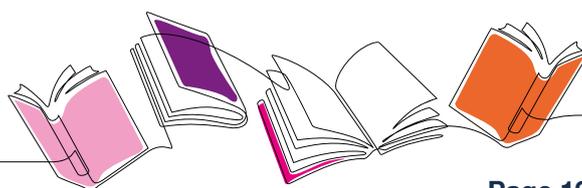
‘Parents, schools, governing bodies, trusts, and the LA will work together to improve school attendance, each recognising and fulfilling their individual and shared responsibilities. This includes understanding that as children and young people grow, they should take on an increasing responsibility for their own attendance.’

## Priority one

**We are in this together;** ensure clear roles and responsibilities for all partners.

What are we going to do?	What outcomes are we seeking?	How will we know we are making a difference?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will regularly bring schools and partner agencies together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice.</li> <li>• We will ensure that we produce and collectively adhere to consistent processes and clear communication pathway.</li> <li>• We will work in partnership with schools to give clear messages on attendance to parents and carers through a variety of media.</li> <li>• We will hold regular meetings with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All schools and partner agencies will work together in a consistent way.</li> <li>• All schools have access to the same information and deliver the same messages.</li> <li>• Parents and carers are taking responsibility for their child’s school attendance.</li> <li>• Early support is offered to schools, children, young people, and their families.</li> <li>• By listening to parents’ perspectives and concerns, schools can better understand the unique needs and circumstances of each child, which can lead to more effective support and interventions.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 100 per cent of schools will be represented at our network forum meetings and will engage in the communications from the local authority in respect of school attendance.</li> <li>• Other services and partners will attend/present at our network meetings.</li> <li>• We will see less children with attendance issues and being taken out of school for holidays during term time.</li> <li>• Regular attendance tracking, monitoring and reporting of different cohorts of children are available.</li> <li>• Improvements in student attendance, academic progress, and overall wellbeing.</li> </ul>

What are we going to do?	What outcomes are we seeking?	How will we know we are making a difference?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will engage with parents to ensure that their voices are heard and valued in the educational process. Schools and LA should create opportunities for open communication, actively seeking input from parents through regular meetings, surveys, and informal discussions.</li> <li>• We will provide access to early help support workers to work intensively with families to provide practical whole-family support where needed to tackle the causes of absenteeism and unblock the barriers to attendance.</li> <li>• We will work with our health partners to provide guidance for schools, parents and carers to help prevent the spread of illnesses.</li> <li>• We will take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Encouraging parents to be actively involved in their child's education not only strengthens the partnership between home and school but also fosters a sense of ownership and shared responsibility for the child's learning and wellbeing.</li> <li>• This collaborative approach can ultimately help create a more supportive and responsive educational environment for all students.</li> <li>• All children, young people and their families will feel better supported to unblock the barriers to school attendance.</li> <li>• Children and young people are attending school.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feedback from parents, gathered through surveys or direct conversations, will provide insights into their satisfaction with the communication and support they are receiving.</li> <li>• Increased parental involvement in school activities, such as attending meetings or participating in school events, which reflects a stronger partnership.</li> <li>• Early help assessments are being used within our schools and referrals are made when needed.</li> <li>• Attendance assessments are being completed by our family workers.</li> <li>• Our education welfare officers are attending team around family meetings where needed.</li> <li>• Fewer pupils will miss school due to illness-related attendance issues.</li> <li>• Fixed penalty notices (FPNs) are being issued when needed and prosecution is taken forward when appropriate in a consistent way across schools.</li> <li>• Other legal support is being considered and discussed during our school meetings.</li> </ul>



## Priority two

‘We are in this together’ outlines a collaborative approach to responsibilities, but achieving consensus on the details is also essential to ensure that we all work towards our shared vision, with clear and aligned expectations.

Each attendance case should follow in its own pathway, taking into account factors such as the severity of the student’s individual needs, relevant vulnerabilities, and the evidence collected by schools (and other partners, where applicable).

What are we going to do?	What outcomes are we seeking?	How will we know we are making a difference?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources will be made available to schools to help identify relevant intervention pathways and signpost families to access support.</li> <li>• A named contact and contact details within the LA will be made available to schools and parents/carers</li> <li>• Bracknell Forest Council will develop a traded offer of school improvement advice, resources and training for schools who wish to enhance these areas</li> <li>• Create an attendance toolkit for schools including templates of letters, action plans, guidance on intervention levels and sharing of data.</li> <li>• Support schools and early years providers to develop policies and practices to bring a consistent approach to promoting good attendance.</li> <li>• Introduce feedback mechanisms for both schools and parents/carers to understand their experience of the support and advice they have received.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Families have access to support available to them from relevant services and partner agencies at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>• Consistent advice and support are being provided to schools, parents, and carers.</li> <li>• Bracknell Forest schools are all trained in the same way and given the same message, ensuring consistent approaches are being taken within our schools.</li> <li>• School attendance is on everyone’s agenda and all service areas are taken responsibility for school attendance.</li> <li>• Create consistency across schools in their approaches and communication with parents and carers.</li> <li>• Bracknell Forest schools are delivering consistent messages within their attendance policy.</li> <li>• An accessible offer of support is made available for schools and parents/carers that meets their needs that is constantly review and improved based on the feedback received.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communication and collaboration will be effective and responsive to addressing and supporting attendance.</li> <li>• Schools are being consistent in their approaches for example how they record absences and when they issue FPNs.</li> <li>• Attendance of the schools at training sessions and evaluation feedback.</li> <li>• An increase in school attendance for those pupils being supported by other service areas.</li> <li>• Review of actions plans take place routinely during schools’ meetings.</li> <li>• Parents are receiving the same messages and approaches from schools.</li> <li>• Schools are adopting and using the model policy.</li> <li>• Feedback shows an increase on satisfaction with the support schools and parents/carers are receiving.</li> </ul>

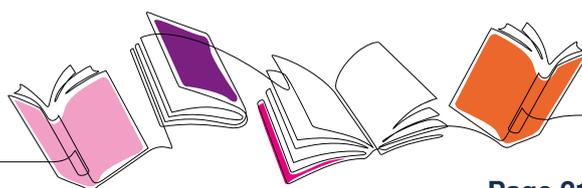
### Priority three

Focus should be given by all partners to pupils who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50 per cent or more of school).

All partners need to be aware of families and students who are economically disadvantaged, and they must work together to recognise and overcome barriers to attendance related to this issue

Children and young people with identified special educational needs and disabilities generally have more severe and persistent absence than those without.

What are we going to do?	What outcomes are we seeking?	How will we know we are making a difference?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work in partnership with our schools to ensure we are providing support for our economic disadvantaged cohort to recognise and overcome barriers to attendance.                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Understanding transport issues.</li> <li>- Supporting those who are late/hungry/cold etc.</li> <li>- Making use of pupil premium.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Engage with voluntary, community and faith sector partners to share best practice and collaborate where needed.</li> <li>• Engage with our wider community to promote the importance of school attendance.</li> <li>• We will ensure that where there are concerns around school attendance and families are open to early help, discussions happen to understand the barriers to attending school and support is available.</li> <li>• Disadvantaged pupil &amp; SEND attendance data will be monitored and reported to the SSPB</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All CYP have the same access to education regardless of their background or home circumstances.</li> <li>• All CYP get the support they need at the right time.</li> <li>• Everyone is taking responsibility for school attendance.</li> <li>• SEND attendance is a strategic priority</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An increase in understanding of what transport support is available and how schools can access this for their CYP and families.</li> <li>• Pupil premium is being utilised in the most effective way to support these families.</li> <li>• Community partners are involved with supporting these families.</li> <li>• Multi-agency approach is being taken to support CYP, including external partners.</li> <li>• Support offered from community partners is being shared with families.</li> <li>• Communities are sharing messages around attendance.</li> <li>• An increase in school attendance for those pupils being supported by other service areas.</li> <li>• An increase in attendance for pupils with SEND</li> </ul>

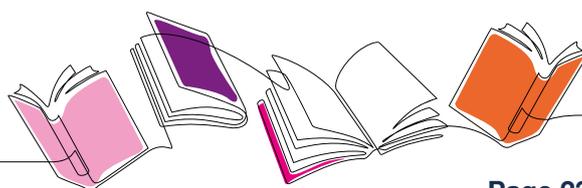


What are we going to do?	What outcomes are we seeking?	How will we know we are making a difference?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s social care will incorporate school attendance within the child’s social care plan which is monitored and reviewed at child in need and core group meetings. This is a multi-agency meeting which would include education.</li> <li>• Children’s social care management and virtual school, work together to ensure that school attendance is prioritised, and that support needed is identified through CLA reviews in conjunction with virtual school and chairs of the CLA reviews.</li> <li>• Our youth hub at Braccan Walk will be used as a welcoming, child-friendly venue to deliver tuition to children with SEND - also giving young people the opportunity to meet the youth team based there and access support/services.</li> <li>• Our youth justice team or specialist services will offer intervention where there are direct links between offending behaviour and school and poor attendance or where the young person is at risk of permanent exclusion.</li> <li>• We will ensure our SEND practices consider where poor attendance is an issue for our young people and the reasons for it are considered at multi agency meetings, individual reviews and SEND assessments.</li> <li>• We will ensure that where there are concerns around school attendance of young carers, discussions happen to understand the barriers to attending school and the support is available.</li> </ul>		

## Priority four

The shift in attitudes and increased anxieties around school attendance for some individuals, families, and communities following the COVID-19 pandemic is widely recognised by schools and services across Bracknell Forest. This has contributed to part of the rise in absence seen within our data.

What are we going to do?	What outcomes are we seeking?	How will we know we are making a difference?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Further embed emotional barriers to school avoidance (EBSA), methodology and resources across the council and our schools.</li> <li>• Continue to ensure there is a range of support for children and young people struggling to attend school due to their mental health. Focusing on both early identification and intervention and co-ordinated multiagency support for extended nonattendance</li> <li>• Support schools and parent/ carers around attendance for CYP with mental health issues by identifying themes across Bracknell Forest based on data and on feedback from partners including schools, and leading campaigns on these.</li> <li>• Create a forum to focus on children and young people who are absent from school more than they are present (those missing 50 per cent or more of school).</li> <li>• Develop a panel to focus on children who are not receiving education within a school setting including those who are permanently excluded or suspended.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CYP have access to support at the earliest opportunity.</li> <li>• Better understanding for schools on how to support with various issues.</li> <li>• All partners working together to make this group the top priority for support.</li> <li>• We are aware of those CYP who are not in the school setting and know they are safe.</li> <li>• Identify the causes of challenging behaviour in schools and support the child and school to develop strategies to enable them to access their education and potential</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Schools are using toolkits and resources relating to EBSA.</li> <li>• More CYP affected by EBSA are able to attend school.</li> <li>• Schools attending sessions to improve their awareness in key themes.</li> <li>• Increased requests for CYP to be discussed at our attendance forum.</li> <li>• Reduction in permanent exclusions and suspensions</li> </ul>



# Governance

To ensure we are making progress on the priorities we have listed we need to ensure that we have a good framework of governance so that everyone can celebrate progress but also be held accountable too.

The education welfare service sits within early help in Bracknell Forest Council. The early help partnership group, made up of a range of partner agencies, will be responsible for providing the strategic oversight of the strategy. We will establish an operational delivery group, that will consist of a range of partner agencies, schools, SEND team and Parent Carer Forum to ensure that the aims of the strategy are translated into practice. This group will be responsible for the day-to-day operational implementation of the strategy.

## Performance measures

**How will we further know that this strategy is making a difference?**

Priority
We are in this together; ensure clear roles and responsibilities for all partners.
We are consistent with shared approach and training.
We recognise the need to support the most vulnerable.
We are responsive in meeting the needs of our local community.
Evidence
Attendance data report Early help audit activity reports Schools and parent/carer feedback Children, young people & families feedback
Overall Measures
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Increase in the numbers of children, young people and families supported through a multi-agency early help plan.</li> <li>b. Increase in schools accessing information, advice and guidance by attending network meetings and school meetings.</li> <li>c. Improved school attendance across all cohorts, including disadvantaged groups.</li> <li>d. Increase in numbers of schools and families who are satisfied with the support they receive.</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1

# Graduated response for school attendance

## Bracknell Forest graduated response working together to improve school attendance

### Safeguarding - any level of attendance

Child/young person is at risk of or suffering significant harm and is in need of help and protection. Has a high level of unmet and complex needs requiring statutory interventions.

The [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023](#)<sup>1</sup> guidance highlights the critical role of schools in safeguarding and promoting children's welfare, emphasising the importance of school attendance as a key factor in ensuring their safety, wellbeing, and development. Persistent or unexplained absence is identified as a potential indicator of wider safeguarding concerns, such as neglect, abuse, or exploitation, and schools are expected to have clear processes in place to monitor attendance and address issues promptly. This includes engaging with the child, parents, or carers to understand the reasons behind poor attendance and, where necessary, making referrals to early help or children's social care. The guidance also stresses the importance of schools working collaboratively with multi-agency safeguarding partnerships, recognising that safeguarding is a shared responsibility requiring effective communication and coordination.

[Bracknell Forest Threshold Guidance](#)<sup>2</sup> provides a framework for professionals who are working with children, young people and families, and aims to help identify circumstances when children may need additional support to achieve their full potential. It introduces a continuum of help and support, provides information on the levels of children's need and gives examples of some of the factors that may indicate when a child or young person needs additional support or protection.

Safeguarding concerns should be reported immediately to the [Bracknell Forest MASH](#)<sup>3</sup> without delay in line with [Bracknell Forest Safeguarding procedures](#).<sup>4</sup> Remember where there is an urgent need to protect a child this should be reported to the police immediately by calling 999.

Telephone: **01344 352005**

Email: [mash@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:mash@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)

- 1 [www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children--2)
- 2 [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/threshold-guidance](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/threshold-guidance)
- 3 [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash)
- 4 [bracknellforestsafeguarding.org.uk/](http://bracknellforestsafeguarding.org.uk/)



## Level zero – School expectations regarding school attendance

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

<p><b>Early intervention and support (universal)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listening to and understanding barriers to attendance and working in partnership with families to remove them.</li> <li>• Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.</li> <li>• Have a clear school attendance policy which all staff, pupils and parents understand.</li> <li>• Accurately complete admission and, except for schools where all pupils are boarders, attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.</li> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities, and other partners where a pupil’s absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severely absent.</li> <li>• Be particularly mindful of pupils absent from school due to mental or physical ill health or their special educational needs and/or disabilities and provide them with additional support in line with <a href="#">mental health issues affecting school attendance – guidance for schools</a>.<sup>5</sup></li> <li>• The early help assessment is embedded within schools and is completed where necessary.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legal interventions</b></p>	<p>In cases of parental non-engagement, absences should be unauthorised, pupil attendance should be closely monitored, and school to send a warning letter reminding parent of legal responsibility.</p>

## Level one – Low level late / irregular / non-attendance

Attendance between 90 per cent and <100 per cent over four weeks	Child/family needs being met by universal services
<p><b>Early intervention and support (universal)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• School to contact parent to determine reason for pupil’s absence on first day of absence and expected date of return.</li> <li>• Attendance and monitoring process to identify when absence or punctuality becomes a concern.</li> <li>• Support from the school’s own attendance officer through telephone calls, letters, emails, and home visits.</li> </ul>

<sup>5</sup> [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary\\_of\\_responsibilities\\_where\\_a\\_mental\\_health\\_issue\\_is\\_affecting\\_attendance.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/63ee20a3d3bf7f62e5f76ba4/Summary_of_responsibilities_where_a_mental_health_issue_is_affecting_attendance.pdf)

### Level one – Low level late / irregular / non-attendance

<p><b>Early intervention and support (universal)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Praise and reward scheme for pupil’s entering level one from any higher level.</li> <li>• Parents to be signposted or referred to Universal services for support, if necessary, via <a href="#">Bracknell Forest Directory</a>.<sup>6</sup></li> <li>• School to follow own school attendance policy/procedures</li> <li>• School to identify and inform any professionals working with family at that time</li> <li>• Schools to consider what might have changed for the child/ren and complete and early help assessment.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legal interventions</b></p>	<p>In cases of parental non-engagement, absences should be unauthorised, pupil attendance should be closely monitored, consult the local <a href="#">code of conduct - September 2024</a><sup>7</sup> and school to send a warning letter reminding parent of legal responsibility.</p>

### Level two – Medium level late / irregular / non-attendance

<p><b>Attendance between 80 per cent and &lt;90 per cent over four weeks</b></p>	<p><b>Child / family may require or would benefit from additional input or support from an agency or agencies – please consider the following where appropriate</b></p>
<p><b>Early intervention and support (universal)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>As level 1.</b></li> <li>• Identifying pattern of absence.</li> <li>• Capture the voice of the child.</li> <li>• School meeting with parents to understand potential barriers and complete an individual attendance action plan</li> <li>• Raise at school attendance targeted meeting with allocated education welfare officer.</li> <li>• Request medical evidence if appropriate.</li> <li>• Involvement from school nursing team.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Emotionally based school attendance (EBSA) toolkit</a>.<sup>8</sup></li> <li>• <a href="#">Early help assessment</a>.<sup>9</sup> plan and review process.</li> <li>• In-school pastoral and mentoring support, counselling and ELSA</li> <li>• Schools to carry out home visits.</li> <li>• <a href="#">Individual healthcare plan</a>.<sup>10</sup></li> </ul>

<sup>6</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/localdirectory](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/localdirectory)

<sup>7</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/school-code-of-conduct](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/school-code-of-conduct)

<sup>8</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/educational-psychology-service](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/educational-psychology-service)

<sup>9</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/eha-young-people](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/eha-young-people)

<sup>10</sup> [assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ce6a72e40f0b620a103bd53/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/5ce6a72e40f0b620a103bd53/supporting-pupils-at-school-with-medical-conditions.pdf)



Level two – Medium level late / irregular / non-attendance	
<p><b>Early intervention and support (universal)</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Referral to external support services / alternative provision.</li> <li>• Referral to <a href="#">access to education service</a>.<sup>11</sup></li> <li>• Referral for <a href="#">early help parenting support</a>.<sup>12</sup></li> <li>• Referral to Bracknell Forest virtual school for children with a social worker.</li> <li>• Referral for <a href="#">specialist assessment</a><sup>13</sup> (e.g. SEND / <a href="#">Getting Help</a><sup>14</sup> CAMHS / educational psychologist).</li> <li>• <a href="#">Young carers assessment and referral</a>.<sup>15</sup></li> <li>• Complete <a href="#">absence notification</a><sup>16</sup> if unauthorised for 10 days or more/ 15 illness</li> <li>• Early help professional (if allocated for targeted support) to use attendance tool to identify potential barriers</li> </ul>
<p><b>Legal interventions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Notice to improve</li> <li>• Attendance contract</li> <li>• Fast Track</li> </ul>

Level three – High level late / irregular / non-attendance	
<p><b>Attendance below 80 per cent over four weeks</b></p>	<p><b>Child / family are experiencing multiple or complex needs. They are struggling to effect change without the support and intervention of services.</b></p>
<p><b>Targeted support</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>As level 2.</b></li> <li>• Complete next steps/advise following work done in Level 2.</li> <li>• Referral to targeted early help via the <a href="#">MASH</a>.<sup>17</sup></li> <li>• If attendance was to fall below 50 per cent then a referral should be made to the multiagency attendance panel to ensure that all severely absent children are identified.</li> <li>• Early help professional (if allocated for targeted support) to refer to the multiagency complex case discussion.</li> </ul>

<sup>11</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/access-to-education](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/access-to-education)

<sup>12</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/parenting-referrals](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/parenting-referrals)

<sup>13</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/specialist-assessment](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/specialist-assessment)

<sup>14</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/getting-help](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/getting-help)

<sup>15</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/young-carers-referral](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/young-carers-referral)

<sup>16</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/absence-notification](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/absence-notification)

<sup>17</sup> [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/mash)

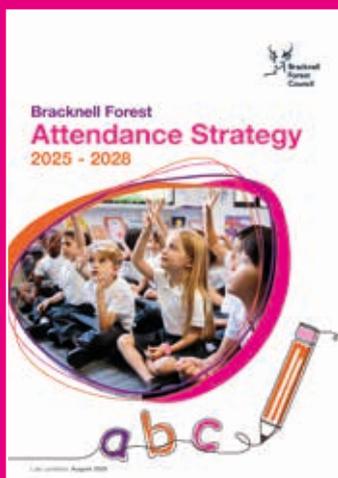
**Level three – High level late / irregular / non-attendance**

<p><b>Legal interventions</b></p>	<p>When all attempts to engage with the family at levels 2 and 3 have failed, <a href="#">referral to the education welfare service</a>.<sup>18</sup></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Fixed penalty notice to be issued by Bracknell Forest Council.</li> <li>• Prosecution in the absence of the penalty being discharged within 28 days.</li> <li>• Parenting order.</li> </ul>
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**Unauthorised absence after request for leave of absence refused**

10 sessions or more	Any level of child / family vulnerability
<p><b>Legal interventions</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headteacher to request fixed penalty notice to be issued by Bracknell Forest Council.</li> <li>• Prosecution in the absence of the fixed penalty notice being discharged within 28 days.</li> </ul>





If you need a reasonable adjustment to communicate with us, please call **01344 352000** or email: **[customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk](mailto:customer.services@bracknell-forest.gov.uk)**.

