

School Attendance

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Access to Education / Vulnerable Groups Lead Officer



Overall Absence

	Overall Absence %
National	7
Statistical Neighbours	7.4
North East	8
County Durham	8 (7 at December 2023)

Published data (Autumn and Spring Terms 2022/23).

Working together to improve attendance (May 2022)

- Attendance is everyone's business.
- Not seen in isolation, concerted effort by all.
- Root causes.
- Unpicking barriers, trusting relationships, right support.
- Support first.
- Roles and responsibilities.
- Multi-agency plans for severe absentees.
- Legal action where support has been exhausted / not complied with or where support not appropriate.

Stepped Approach

- **Expect:** high standards of attendance from pupils and parents, build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school and ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.
- **Listen and understand:** When a pattern is spotted, discuss this, listen to understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.
- **Facilitate support:** Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.
- **Formalise support:** Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.
- **Enforce:** Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education.

Support from the Local Authority

Rigorous **tracking of local attendance data** to devise a strategic approach to attendance prioritising the pupils, pupil cohorts and schools on which to provide support and focus its efforts on to unblock area wide barriers to attendance.

A **School Attendance Support Team** (locally the Attendance Improvement Team) which provides the following core functions free of charge to all schools (regardless of type):

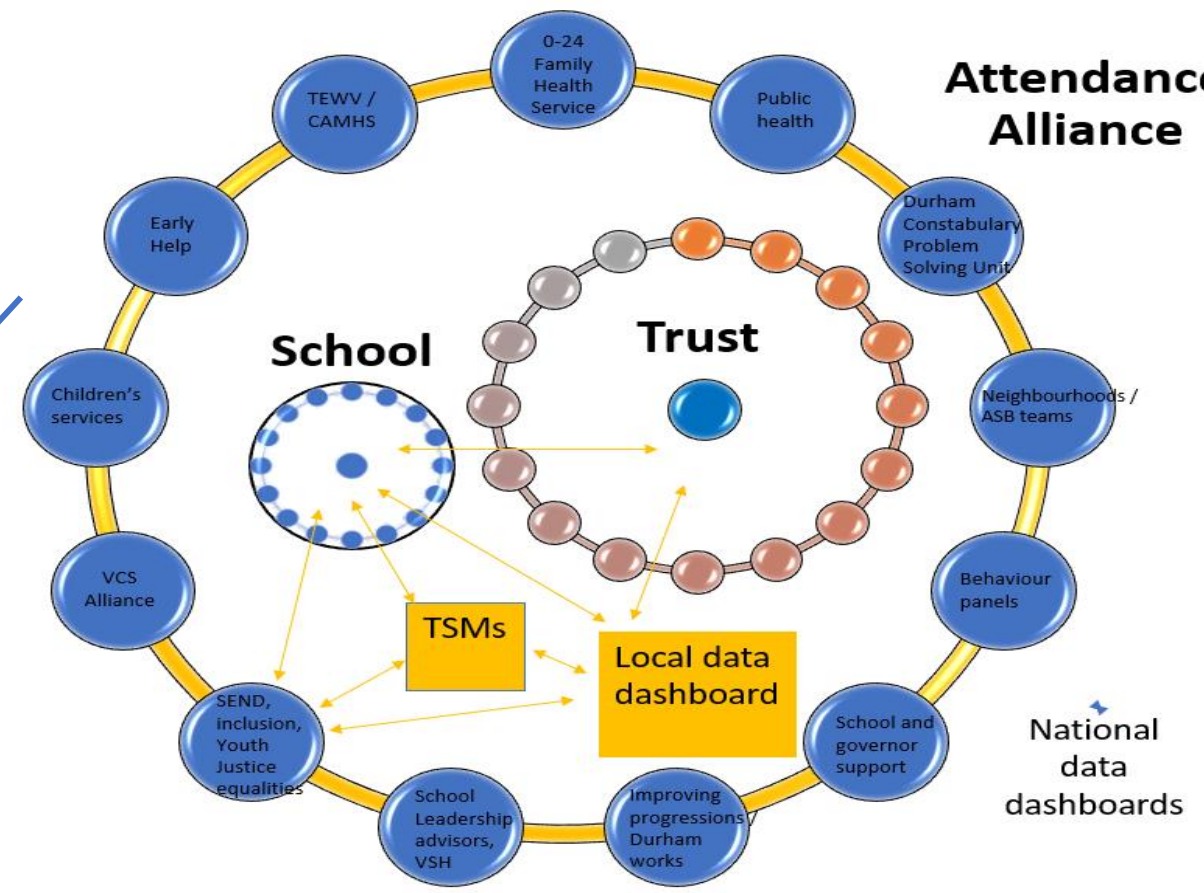
- Communication and advice: regularly bring schools together to communicate messages, provide advice and share best practice between schools and trusts within the area.
- Targeting Support Meetings: hold termly conversations with schools, using their attendance data to identify pupils and cohorts at risk of poor attendance and agree targeted actions and access to services for those pupils.
- Multi-disciplinary support for families: 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.
- Legal intervention: take forward attendance legal intervention (using the full range of parental responsibility measures) where voluntary support has not been successful or engaged with.
- Monitor and improve the attendance of children with a social worker through their Virtual School.

Work to date

- Self-evaluations.
- Conference, webinars and twilight sessions.
- Targeting Support Meetings with schools.
- Attendance alliance:
 - Data sharing nationally (WONDE) and locally (internal).
 - Workstreams for key focus areas and task and finish groups.
 - Frequent absences due to illness pilot.
- Children with social worker protocol.
- Attendance strategy developed, corresponding guides.
- School's portal developments.



Attendance Alliance



Attendance Strategy

EHE Guide

Attendance Guide

CME Guide

Toolkit CWSW

FPN Guide

Legal Action Guide

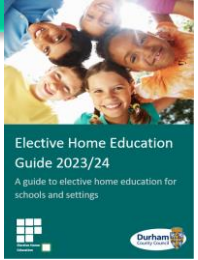


Attendance Strategy

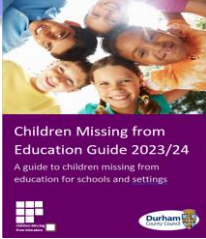


Attendance Guide

EHE Guide



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Durham Inclusion, Exclusion and Pupil Movement

David Wall

Inclusion & Alternative Provision Coordinator



- During the 2021/22 academic year the Secondary BIP's supported **620** pupils with **70** pupils going on to be permanently excluded, this represents **88%** pupils successfully supported without being permanently excluded.
- The Primary panel supported **50** young people through, advice, guidance, outreach support and short-term placements during 2020/21 as a result there were no pupils permanently excluded.
- During 2022/23 the Secondary BIP's supported **803 pupil** with **120** pupils going on to be permanently excluded. This represents **85%** pupils successfully supported without being permanently excluded.
- The continued impact of Covid on both pupils and staffing has proven to be a challenge for all schools, this can be reflected in the increased number of referrals and exclusions in KS3 and the increased number of exclusion compared to pre pandemic years..
- The Primary Panel supported **53** pupils during 2022/23 with no permanent exclusions, however the pressure within the Primary sector continues to be a priority area of concern.

Primary Permanent Exclusions

- It is anticipated that during the 23/24 academic year there will be primary aged pupils permanently excluded within Durham.
- The work carried out since 2016 has prevented primary permanent exclusions, however the pressures currently in the system from MAT's, the challenges employing and retaining quality staff to support pupils with complex needs and the lack of capacity within specialist settings will impact the Primary Inclusion support offer over the next few years.

Primary Behaviour and Inclusion Partnership Support to Schools, September 2023

- The Local Authority working in partnership with Headteachers and a range of professionals from, Education, Health, Early Help and SEND and Inclusion services have carried out a review of current practices and developed an enhanced offer to schools requiring support for young people displaying behaviours of concern.

Areas of focus:

- A shared, strategic approach to fostering inclusion and the use of Alternative Education Provision across County Durham.
- To build on the work of the Primary and Secondary Behaviour and Inclusion Partnerships by strengthening the remit of the panels, broadening the membership, and supporting developments to reduce long term pressures on the HNB.
- To agree a collective responsibility for all pupils
- To continue to support transition across all key stages/phases.
- Reintegration of permanently excluded pupils back into mainstream education.
- Reducing pupil mobility

Secondary Panel Developments

3 Year development plans to support inclusion

The LA has agreed to support business plans with a focus on preventative work and alternative provisions placements as part of localised 3-year development plans.

- Panel Schools have also committed to support this work by agreeing to allocate from school budgets £1.925 million over the 3-year period.
- **Transition Support Arrangements**
- LA officers have worked closely with Primary and Secondary Leaders alongside support services to identify more than 750 Year 6 pupils who may require additional targeted or individual support due to a wide range of needs to ensure their transition into Secondary Education is successfully supported during 2022/23

Alternative provision

- A countywide framework and protocol have been established and endorsed by DASH (February 2022). The protocol provides a consistent approach across all schools when decisions are made to place young people into alternative education placements.
- The LA operates an Alternative Provision directory, all providers within the directory must demonstrate systems, premises, policies and legal duties are in place and have been signed off by LA officers.

Reintegration of Permanently Excluded pupils

- A reintegration protocol agreed at DASH on the 5 May 2021 supports pupils returning back into mainstream schools following a permanent exclusion. The protocol has supported 34 pupils back into mainstream education.

Managed Moves including changes from September 23

- There has been an increase in managed moves requests during 2022/23, however the LA have been working with schools to utilise this intervention in a more successful format.
- The new Supported Offsite Placement protocol introduced September 23 ensures only the most appropriate pupils will be considered to increase the success rate and reduce unsuitable pupil movement.

In Year Pupil Movement and Fair Access Protocol

- The increased number of schools converting to academies and becoming their own admission authority has placed the LA's admission procedures in conflict when offering support to parents wanting to transfer their children into Durham schools.
- Representatives from MAT's, maintained schools and LA officers have agreed and implemented a Fair Access Protocol to support the admission of unplaced young people, this new Protocol commenced September 23.

Main Implications

The Woodlands (PRU) permanent exclusion and preventive bases

- The Woodlands continues to face significant issues within the Key Stage 3 and 4 (secondary age range) bases at Ferryhill,
- The pressure of numbers of pupils on roll and the requirement to use alternative provision to provide an education offer from day 6 of a permanent exclusion will need to be monitored closely, particularly with the pending SEND Inspection and Ofsted inspection.
- There are two bases operating to support Key Stage 1 and 2 pupils, (The Willows and Beeches) along with outreach support- this will need to be reviewed once Primary permanent exclusion require access as part of the day 6 offer from the LA.

Areas for Development

Review of Woodlands including proposed new bases

- Priority to develop a permanent fit for purpose facilities to support pupils requiring support from The Woodlands to meet changing needs.
- This would provide support to schools in retaining pupils in their local communities and to ensure quality provision is available to our most vulnerable pupils when it is needed, including fewer off-site alternative provision placements.