



School attendance hubs

Aim of the hubs

Attendance is one of the biggest challenges facing the school system today. The aim of school attendance hubs is to enable schools with strong attendance practice to share their approaches with senior leaders in other similar schools to help them to improve. Hubs will also facilitate an ongoing professional dialogue about attendance amongst school leaders on a peer support basis.

Overview

Attendance hubs are led by senior leaders in schools with effective attendance practice. Through their hubs, these lead schools will share, in-depth, their strategies, ethos and resources for improving attendance.

Schools who join the hub will have access to half termly virtual hub meetings run by the lead school as an opportunity to share practice and discuss shared challenges with others. Participants will be expected to use learning and approaches from the hub to revise their schools' existing systems for managing attendance to drive improvement.

Support is open to all state-maintained schools including primary, secondary, special schools and alternative provision providers. The programme is intended for senior leaders with oversight of attendance.

Expectations for hub partner schools

Schools who have joined an attendance hub are expected to:

1. Commit to implement changes to their attendance practice through the hub.
2. Have a nominated senior leader who will join half-termly hub meetings.
3. Be an active member of the hub and hub discussions, and for the nominated senior leader to contribute to the wider group effort to improve school attendance in all schools represented.
4. Share practice with others including actions taken that have significantly reduced absence in their school.
5. Support the hubs programme by providing regular feedback to the hub lead school about what is working and engage with DfE to share attendance progress since joining the hub.
6. Sign up to the DfE [pilot school attendance data collection](#).

Expectations for hub lead schools

Hub lead schools are expected to:

1. Act as an attendance improvement leader for the hub, explaining the shared attendance challenge facing member schools, how the hub will work, and setting a positive ambitious tone.
2. Collate and develop a set of key attendance materials and resources that will be shared with other hub schools.
3. Present the resources and talk through their approach and ethos in the initial hub meetings, and introduce the focus of the hub.
4. Chair virtual hub meetings, and then be involved in overseeing and participating in ongoing hub meetings on a half-termly basis.
5. Support participating hub schools to make changes to their practice and improve their attendance.
6. Where appropriate, host visits for school leaders in their hub.

Cycle of hub meetings

We envisage that schools in hubs will meet on a half-termly basis over 12-18 months. The following is an indicative structure:

First introductory hub meeting. This will be an opportunity for hub members to meet, and for the lead hub school to set out its approach to improving attendance. The lead school will also introduce its approach to managing attendance and share relevant resources.

Second hub meeting. As part of this meeting, participating schools will be able to ask questions about the resources introduced in the first meeting. They will also commit to take forward changes to their attendance approach and report back on progress in future meetings.

Third hub meeting. This will include discussion of a key element of attendance practice on a rotating basis (eg, effective use of data, working with the local authority, building a strong culture of attendance etc.). As part of the meeting, several schools will also discuss progress to date in implementing their new attendance practice. There will also be an opportunity for review and to consider if further changes need to be made.

Fourth hub meeting.

Fifth hub meeting.

Sixth hub meeting. Final hub meeting. This final meeting will be an opportunity to reflect on progress made over the last 12 months, successes, ongoing and revisit commitments made in the initial meetings.

Attendance links and resources

The Department for Education and other agencies have also published a number of guidance and effective practice resources to support schools in managing attendance. This includes:

1. Our latest [attendance guidance](#) which sets out expectations for schools, trusts and local authorities.
2. A number of [webinars focussed on effective attendance practice](#) for schools, trusts and local authorities.
3. An [attendance data dashboard](#) showing data at a national, regional and local authority level which is updated on a fortnightly basis.
4. [Guidance from the National Health Service](#) about where illness might affect a pupil's attendance at school.
5. A [guide from the behavioural insights team](#) focussed on supporting schools who send messages to parents.
6. [Supplementary guidance for schools and local authorities](#) related to mental health and attendance.
7. A [rapid evidence review of attendance interventions](#) from the Education Endowment Foundation website.
8. A number of written case studies where schools share their techniques for [managing attendance](#), [using text messages to remind parents of their child's attendance](#), and [working with the community to tackle the root causes of absence](#).

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