

School Attendance Strategy

Attend to Achieve

Working together in Lincolnshire to support children back into school

2023 to 2026



Forward

Attendance has always been at the forefront of our thinking, but there is no doubt that the pandemic shone a bigger light on it. The importance of children remaining in schools was clear for all to see during the height of the pandemic when the government rightly ensured that schools were open for children of key workers and those who were seen as 'vulnerable'. Since schools returned to full capacity there has been a real focus on attendance, mental health and emotional wellbeing and the government has been fully supportive through the recent DfE guidance.

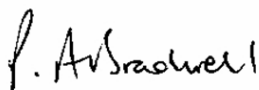
The recent past has taught us many things, not least it reminded us all of the importance of schools within the world of safeguarding. Children who are persistently absent and not accessing full-time education are at increased risk of being victims of harm, exploitation, radicalisation. The reasons for persistent absenteeism are often a symptom of wider issues in a child's home life and it is important that the value of schools and education settings in providing early help and support services is recognised. They provide the opportunity to intervene before problems worsen and children's social care is involved.

Like safeguarding, we must adopt an 'attendance is everyone's business' mindset. It is not just schools and local authorities that have a role here; multi-agency approaches to attendance are key.

As well as safeguarding, schools provide the scaffolding that children need to navigate the challenges they may face through their time in education. It provides an environment that is totally dedicated to their wellbeing and progress with the aim of supporting them into adulthood, employment and great opportunities in life. Those who do not attend school are likely to miss out on this.

We are now all familiar with the new school attendance guidance: *Working Together to Improve School Attendance*. Within the guidance is a clear recognition of the role local authorities can play in this space and we welcome the principles of working with schools and partners to ensure no children fall through the gaps.

Our new Lincolnshire strategy to improve school attendance recognises where we are, where we want to be and the resources we have to ensure that all Lincolnshire children can and want to, go to school. It puts a focus back onto school attendance and the importance of this to ensure the safety, wellbeing and achievement of all our children.



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Introduction

School attendance is arguably one of the most important indicators of school success based on the simple fact that you cannot learn when you are not present to learn. Whilst there are always exceptions to the rule, children and young people who have good attendance, are much more likely to achieve academically. School also brings other benefits such as social interaction and support with health and wellbeing. The longer children are absent, the more likely they are to become isolated and the harder it is to return to school. Some may also be drawn to risk taking/anti-social behaviour or become victims of crime.

Evidence suggests that children who attend school regularly are more likely to go on to lead healthier, wealthier lives. This strategy recognises the complexity of attending school and the fact that securing good attendance of all our children is a team effort. School attendance is 'everyone's business'. The positive news is that many of the children in Lincolnshire have very good attendance and so leave school well prepared for the adult working life where good attendance is also expected. Our vision is that all our children in Lincolnshire attend as much as they can. We know there is excellent practice in schools and strong partnership working across all our services supporting children into school. However, we are also aware that going to school can be extremely challenging for some of our children and is multi-faceted and therefore more needs to be done to support children who are not attending regularly and to recognise the risk that non-attendance brings to the academic achievement, well-being and safety of our children.

This strategy focusses on improving attendance for children of statutory school age. However, good attendance is often learned behaviour, and therefore starts in early education, even pre-school. Children who do not attend regularly in reception class are more than likely to continue to be poor attenders throughout primary school and into secondary provision.

In the same way, we promote the attendance of young people post statutory school age at some form of education provision under the statutory guidance 'Participation of Young People in Education, Employment, or Training' Statutory Guidance for Local Authorities (2016). Whilst the laws of attendance are different from post 16 until 18, the importance of attendance and the impact of non-attendance remains the same in the role they play in ensuring good outcomes for young people. Children who are most likely not to continue in education until 18 are those who had poor attendance at school.

In summary, we know that if we can help everyone understand the importance of regular attendance early in a child's education and prior to securing full time work, there is a better chance of the child achieving well later on in adult life.

Why is regular attendance at school important?

Missing sessions means children fall behind, which not only impacts on their future achievement, but also adds additional stress and worry as the child attempts to catch up affecting their mental health and that of their family.

The evidence of the impact on non-attendance on achievement is very clear. The DfE release, [Short breaks damage young people's futures - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/short-breaks-damage-young-peoples-futures)

in 2015 outlined the following links:

- pupils with the lowest 5% of absence rates were more than four times more likely to achieve 5 good GCSEs, including English and maths, and 22 times more likely to achieve the English Baccalaureate, than pupils with the highest 5% of absence rates
- pupils with no absence from school were nearly three times more likely to achieve 5 A* to C GCSEs, including English and Maths, and around 10 times more likely to achieve the English Baccalaureate, than pupils missing 15 to 20% of school across key stage four
- primary school pupils with no absence were around 1.5 times more likely to achieve the expected level (level 4 or above), and 4.5 times more likely to achieve above the expected level (level 5 or above), than pupils that missed 15 to 20% of key stage two

Covid19 has disrupted any progress made on pupil achievement since 2015 and so the correlation between attendance and achievement continues at the same, if not higher, rate.

However, school is not just a place for academic learning, it is a place where children make early, lifelong friendships, learn about themselves, find out what they are good at and passionate about. It's about shaping choices that help children make a positive contribution to society and live a happy, balanced life. It also provides structure and routine where this may be missing at home, and provides the care of other adults who they may learn to trust. School can be a safe, supportive environment where its focus is solely to ensure the success and wellbeing of the children in its care.

Children who do not attend school or any other educational provision not only miss out on the opportunity to do well academically but also on the wider supportive network that schools provide. There are strong links between children missing from school and child exploitation and involvement in criminal activity. 90% of young offenders have been persistently absent from school (A Ministry of Justice report published in June 2018) There

is also a strong correlation between poor attendance and the mental health of young people. Children of today face many challenges to their safety and well-being and the role of school has become an integral part in keeping children safe from harm and helping them navigate through the complexities of growing up in today's society.

In summary, going to school provides the right environment, for the majority of our children, to achieve the following:

- good educational outcomes in school and further/higher education
- a happier and positive view on life in and out of school
- good relationships, trust and a sense of belonging for marginalised children and their families
- improved confidence and resilience
- good mental health
- low risk of child exploitation, anti-social behaviour and other safeguarding concerns
- employability

Some parents take the serious decision to take their children out of school to home education them. Whilst this is parental choice and the right decision for some children and families, it should not be a response to a child's inability to cope with school and other factors impacting on their lives. It is the role of the 'team around the child' to ensure that all barriers are removed to allow the child to get the education they choose and deserve.

Why are children not attending school?

Whilst we strive for excellent attendance for all our children, we are fully aware of the challenges that pupils face. The recent pandemic has had a severe impact on some children both physically and mentally; it added to the already complex picture of why children do not attend that relates to situations inside and outside of the school gates. The reasons for absences can be wide and varied however, there are some recognised categories that can help us to ensure our support is targeted, implemented at the right time and by the right people.

- **illness** – following the pandemic, absence levels due to pupil illness has increased. Part of this is due to lower immunity of children but there is also a tendency for parents and school to keep children away from school for longer periods of time.
- **medical appointments** – medical appointments do not have to be in school time but they generally are, often due to limited availability.
- **unmet special educational or medical need** – the pandemic has resulted in delayed identification of special or medical need. Whilst schools must continue to meet

needs through reasonable adjustments whilst they assess, the delay in identification has resulted in children being absent.

- **anxiety (parent/child)** – fear of school is a growing concern which was accentuated by the pandemic. Any long term absence is likely to trigger a level of anxiety as well as the common reasons such as bullying, friendship groups and unmet special educational and medical need. Many parents developed anxiety themselves resulting in a reluctance to send their children to school in situation where previously they would have.
- **holidays** – absence during term time due to holidays is on the increase as the opportunities to travel increase following the restrictions of the pandemic.
- **parent dissatisfaction with school** – this can result in parents removing the child from school until they feel that any issues have been resolved.
- **truancy** – particularly older children can make their own decisions on whether they attend school. Some parents are unaware of these absences until the school inform them. These children may be at risk of harm by engaging in criminal activity or being a victim of exploitation. It may be the involvement in risky behaviour that results in the non-attendance or the poor attendance providing opportunities for this engagement.
- **bereavement** – children can take a significant period of time to overcome the sadness of a bereavement and without support the impact of the loss can escalate resulting in further barriers and increased absences.
- **parenting** – this ranges from parents’ inability to provide the daily structure that is needed for a child to attend regularly to parent’s disinterest in sending their child to school due to their own educational experience or life events.

The result of these and other specific factors that impact on children’s lives, is that school attendance is below where it should be in Lincolnshire and therefore the risk of underachievement, mental and social issues and potentially, involvement in criminal or anti-social behaviour is also higher.

What do we mean by ‘good attendance’?

Ideally, children should attend every school day therefore 100% is the expected level, however, 95% is considered as good attendance. Anything below 95% is not good enough and will require action by school and parents in partnership with the local authority and other relevant services. This may seem a high expectation of the children, however when converted into session and days missed, it soon becomes apparent why this level of attendance is important. 95% attendance means a child misses two weeks of school across the year, 70% attendance, for example, means a child is absent for more than 11 weeks of the school year. This level of absence can make it very challenging for the child to catch up and can spiral into further absences.

Attendance (%)	Number of Days Absent	Number of Weeks (approx.)
95%	9	2
90%	19	4
85%	29	6
80%	38	8
75%	48	10
70%	57	11.5
65%	67	13.5
50%	76	15

National Context: Next steps

Prior to the pandemic school attendance across the country was improving. In 2008 absence was at 6.4% absence, by 2018, this was at record low of 4.3%. In 2015 a Persistent Absence level was introduced; this remained steady from 2015 until 2018, when it began to rise. In 2019 both overall absence and persistent absence began to increase, with overall absence reaching 4.93% and PA at its highest at 13.14%. The next two years saw unprecedented levels of absenteeism due to the pandemic resulting in a return to a level of overall absence similar to 2008 and a persistent absence rate of 23.59%.

In May 2022, the DfE published the guidance **Working Together to Improve School Attendance** and **Summary Table of Responsibilities for School Attendance** [Working together to improve school attendance – gov.uk \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/guidance/working-together-to-improve-school-attendance)

The guidance gives a clear message that improving attendance should not be the responsibility of one organisation but achieved by working collaboratively and addressing the root cause of the absence.

Improving attendance is everyone’s business. 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 be and are keen and ready to learn. (Working Together to Improve School Attendance)

The guidance provides a framework:

**Expect – Monitor– Listen and Understand –
Facilitate Support – Formulise Support – Enforce**

Expect

Everyone; pupil, parent, school and other agencies involved should all have the same expectation for attending school. The culture across a school and the local authority should be that attending school is achievable for everyone, attending every day is the expected aspiration.

Monitor

Early intervention is key and this is possible through early identification of non- attendance. Patterns of attendance for individuals as well as cohorts of children will help schools stop absences becoming entrenched by putting in the right strategies and getting the right people involved early on.

Listen and Understand

There is always a reason for non -attendance; providing possibilities for parents and young people to talk about the reasons in and out of school, will allow all parties to work together to come up with the best solutions that will have the biggest impact.

Facilitate Support

Early intervention to facilitate change, through early assessment and identification of appropriate provision in and out of school, will have a positive impact on removing the barriers to attending. Support should not only be around the child in school but around the whole family especially when there are wider issues and ones that can impact on other children in the family.

Formulise Support

Where parents are not engaging with the support offered or are uncooperative, then all partners must work together to explain the consequences of this, whilst support continues. Partners should consider who may be the right person to pursue this to try to establish good relationships and trust. Parenting Orders and Education Supervision Orders may be considered at this stage.

Enforce

Where all strategies have been exhausted, enforcement may be the only option that remains to protect the right of the child to an education. The school and partners must be confident that there are no other strategies to be tried.

What do we already know about attendance in Lincolnshire?

We know that there are lots of positive examples of good practice in schools, teams, and organisations in relation to the management of attendance. We have a plethora of good practice, services and approaches that are part of the wider picture in improving the attendance of children in school: These are:

- **Early Help Strategy** The strength of our Early Help offer means that a child, young person or their carer who is worried about attending school can share this at an early point allowing all professionals to take the best actions at the right time and for the right period of time. It supports schools to address the cause of the absence before the absence becomes the concern. [Team Around the Child – Professional resources \(lincolnshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/early-help)
- **Futures4me** A specific Early Help response focusing on support for young people who may be at risk of being in the criminal justice system and/or committing crimes and likely to be absent from school as part of this. [Requesting support from Future For Me – Professional resources \(lincolnshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/futures4me)
- **Young Carers** A specific Early Help resource focusing on support for children and young people who find themselves caring for others within the home or extended family; a role that is most likely to impact on their ability to attend school regularly. [Young carers – Young carers service - Lincolnshire County Council](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/young-carers)
- **Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) pathway** Introduced in January 2022, to give schools guidance and support to begin to address the extreme absence due to school phobia and anxiety. [Social, emotional and mental health – Professional resources \(lincolnshire.gov.uk\)](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/social-emotional-mental-health)
- **Healthy Minds/CAMHS** (include SEMH strategy) is available to all children under 19 to support the emotional wellbeing of children and help address the factors affecting their inability to attend school. The social, emotional and mental health strategy for Lincolnshire demonstrates the commitment to supporting children to achieve better mental health and enjoy their time at school [Healthy Minds Lincolnshire: Lincolnshire Young Minds \(lpft.nhs.uk\)](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/healthy-minds)
[Social, emotional and mental health \(SEMH\) strategy for Lincolnshire 2023 to 2026 – Lincolnshire County Council](https://www.lincolnshire.gov.uk/social-emotional-mental-health)
- **Behaviour Outreach Support Service (BOSS)** support for schools to manage the behaviour of children which may impact on their ability to engage in school activity and sustain good attendance. [Lincolnshire Behaviour Outreach Support Service \(BOSS\) - Family Action \(family-action.org.uk\)](https://www.family-action.org.uk/lincolnshire)
- **Graduated Approach** The Assess, Plan, Do and Review considers the impact of the special educational need on the attendance of a child and builds this into plans and

future provision [Identifying and supporting SEND – The Graduated Approach - Lincolnshire County Council](#)

- **Ethnic Minority and Traveller education** Support for those new to the UK or who may have different experiences of education which impacts on their understanding of parental expectations around attendance or ability to participate fully, adding risk to good attendance. [Ethnic minority and Traveller education – Lincolnshire County Council](#)
- **Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children’s Partnership** Focus on keeping children safe and are committed to understanding and addressing the risks associated with non - attendance for our most vulnerable groups. [Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership – About the LSCP - Lincolnshire County Council](#)
- **Virtual School** Regular monitoring of provision for children in care and focus on improving achievement of children with a social worker, including whether they are in school and attending well. [The virtual school – What is the virtual school? - Lincolnshire County Council](#)
- **Voluntary Sector** A wide range of organisations with specific expertise who can work with individuals and families on the particular issues that are impacting on a child’s ability to attend school.
- **Alternative Provision** Local Authority commissioned and independent provision that can provide a different educational experience for those children and young people who find attending their mainstream school challenging.
- **Early Years** Support in our early years settings to embed the importance of attending a provision; good attendance in pre-school setting is a strong indicator of good attendance later in the child’s education. [Support for childcare providers – How to deliver funded childcare - Lincolnshire County Council](#)

We know that schools already work effectively with this wide range of services and approaches; however, data analysis of attendance tells us that there is more we can do together to ensure consistently across the local authority.

What's new in supporting the improvement of attendance in schools?

The school attendance team

As outlined in the new guidance, every local authority must have a school attendance team. For Lincolnshire, this sits within the current wider Inclusion and Attendance service area and will focus on 4 functions:

1. overview of the strategy
2. strategic monitoring and conducting of targeted school meeting to all schools including independent and alternative provision
3. advice and strategic support to all schools
4. support in decision making prior to following a legal process
5. communication and training to schools, Children's Services and the wider supporting organisations

The new team will consist of four attendance officers and one team leader. Each school will have a nominated officer.

Lincolnshire's attendance priorities

Seven priorities have been identified as areas that need to improve and where improvement will have a significant impact on the overall attendance rate. These are:

1. The level of authorised attendance
2. The level of persistent absence
3. Absence rates in special schools
4. Absence rates for children with Education Health Care Plans
5. Absence rates of children with a Social Worker
6. Absence rates for children with anxiety/school phobia
7. Absence rates of children known to the youth offending service (Futures4Me)

Targeting Support Meetings (TSM)

In line with the DfE guidance, local authorities are expected to organise termly targeting support meetings with each school in their area. These meetings will take place three times per year and will focus on the following areas:

- School attendance priorities
- Local authority attendance priorities

- Attendance of children in the five absence categories (see below)
- Attendance of specific cohorts of children
- Successes and areas for improvement

Where the school already meets on a termly basis with a local authority officer e.g. maintained schools meetings with their locality leads, special school meetings with SEND team leader, conversations around attendance will form part of this discussion. All other TSM's will be conducted by the attendance team.

A template will be used for these meetings so that information collected from schools is consistent and can be used in any local authority data analysis.

These meetings will be an opportunity to build strong relationships and work collaboratively to support the wider attendance approach. There is also an opportunity in these meetings to help the school identify areas to focus on in their school policies or approaches. This may include help in analysing their own data and how they may learn from and work with other schools who have faced similar patterns or trends. Where barriers to attendance for a pupil or family are complex and a child is within the severe absence category, the meetings will be an opportunity for the school, with the support of the local authority representative, to identify next steps.

The five categories of school attendance

Lincolnshire has identified five level of absence and all children will be categorised by schools into one of these levels. This is not about labelling children but identifying groups and, where appropriate, individual children and being very clear of their attendance rates, what needs to happen to improve this and measuring that improvement.

School Attendance – Boundaries and Description

Boundary	Description
95-100%	As expected
91-94%	At risk of persistent absence
80-90%	Persistent absence
51-79%	At risk of severe absence
<=50%	Severe absence

Schools will be expected to report on numbers and percentages of children that are in these five categories at the TSMs.

Children with a social worker

Good attendance at school offers additional safeguarding for vulnerable children.

Historically, children with a social worker have had higher absence rates with a quarter of children who have ever needed a social worker being persistently absent compared with 10% for those who have never been in need.

Therefore, additional monitoring is required to improve the attendance of this cohort and this will be carried out by the virtual school as part of their expansion to the role of overseeing the education of pupils with a social worker. [Virtual school head role extension to children with a social worker - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/news/virtual-school-head-role-extension-to-children-with-a-social-worker)

This will include:

- Regular monitoring of attendance of children with a social worker including those looked-after by the local authority
- Setting aspirational targets for attendance within child protection plans and as part of the personal education plans for looked after children
- Specific attendance training for designated teachers who support children who have ever needed a social worker
- Work across children's social care services to make sure social workers understand the importance of good school attendance and that it is a key part of all child in need and child protection plans if attendance is a concern
- Ensure schools inform a child's social worker if there are unexplained absences from school

Attendance is 'everyone's business'

Where previously, attention to school attendance has been the responsibility of schools and attendance teams, it should now be considered by all those working with children and families:

Securing good attendance cannot therefore be seen in isolation, and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, behaviour, bullying, special educational needs support, pastoral and mental health and wellbeing, and effective use of resources, including pupil premium. It cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff, or organisation, it must be a concerted effort across all teaching and nonteaching staff in school, the trust or governing body, the local authority, and other local partners (Working Together to Support School Attendance)

The expectations are that everyone:

- is supportive of school and school attendance
- is attendance curious' and asks why children are not in school
- considers school commitments when making appointments and contacts with families
- is aware of the wider safeguarding risks of child not being at school (is the child at home alone, or out alone?)
- reminds parents of support available e.g. early help
- contacts the school if there is information that they should know (not being at school is a safeguarding concern)
- considers any changes in their organisation's delivery that may impact positively on the attendance of children

Joint decision making on enforcement for non-attendance

A parent who does not ensure the attendance of their child or provision of education elsewhere is at risk of a criminal investigation. The decision to follow this route by schools should not be taken lightly. It is not the position of the local authority to fine parents but to follow the best pathway to improve the attendance of children. If any other route can be taken to reach this goal, then it should be considered. Lack of improvement or lack of parental engagement in attempts to improve attendance could be considered as a reason to pursue a legal route.

To ensure that this has been investigated fully, schools are asked to contact the attendance officer for their area to discuss cases for fixed penalty notices (other than family holidays) and prosecutions prior to submitting a report. The process is as follows:

1. School follow attendance policy procedures: school attendance has not improved
2. School discusses child with their named attendance officer if they are considering a legal route to address poor attendance
3. Decision is made as to whether there is any other approaches and support than can be offered that would have a positive impact on the attendance of the child
4. If child is on a CiN or CP plan, decision must be shared and agreed with the social worker
5. If legal approach is put on hold, case review takes place in agreed timescale
6. If no other approach is identified, case proceeds as prosecution

Improving school attendance model interventions

The model of improving school attendance mirrors the Early Help approach within Lincolnshire, where non-attendance is seen as a symptom of something else and therefore needs are assessed to identify the underlying cause. It also mirrors the processes for identifying risk of harm, non-attendance being one of the indicators that could trigger a referral.

Expected attendance

Children who are attending school for more than 95% of the possible sessions are considered as attending as expected.

Where no other services are involved, the school will provide universal support which includes:

- first day of absence contact
- following school absence process
- regular communication with parents
- input to pupils on attendance– assemblies, tutor time
- regular monitoring of attendance data
- regular sharing of attendance data to all staff
- attendance a feature of parent evenings
- system/praise for recognising improvement in attendance
- reference to attendance in any early help assessment

For children on CiN or CP plans or CinC

- regular updates to agencies involved of improved or falling attendance
- school attendance discussed at TAC, CiN, CP and CinC meeting as regular feature

For children with special educational needs, medical needs and EHCP

- regular monitoring of attendance including days of illness, medical appointments to ensure all needs are met

At risk of persistent absence

Children who attend 91-94% of all school sessions are at risk of falling into the persistent absence category. Children not at 95% attendance will need further intervention in addition to the universal support above. This may include external support that is currently not in place.

In addition to the above support, schools should:

- consider completing an early help assessment if not in place
- use appropriate tools to support the EH assessment – ATTEND, V-SEND
- set up team around the child (TAC) if appropriate
- consider mental health interventions
- offer pastoral support
- offer home visits
- discuss at school attendance panel
- consider parenting contract

For children on CiN and CP plan, or are CiC:

- review attendance at all plan meetings identifying new actions that may specifically improve attendance

For children with special needs, medical needs or an EHCP:

- follow the graduated approach with increased focus on the needs behind non- attendance

Persistent Absence

Children who have attendance at 89% or below are considered to be persistently absent. There is potential at this point to consider legal intervention once all other avenues of support have been explored.

Schools should consider:

- complete an early help assessment
- consider a TAC
- consider whole family support especially if factors are impacting on more than one child's attendance
- review pastoral support increasing family and child contact if appropriate
- keep detailed chronology of visits, contacts and outcomes
- ensure parents are fully informed of the consequences of non attendance focusing on the detrimental impact on child's achievement and wellbeing as well as the legal implications
- consider a parenting contract or education supervision order if appropriate
- consider a Fixed Penalty Notice if absence is linked to family holiday that has been unauthorised
- consider submitting a legal report if attendance is not improving and unlikely to even if level of support is increased

For children on CiN or CP plan, or are CiC:

- attendance is feature of plan meetings and actions of plan and their impact on attendance is discussed

For children with special needs, medical needs or an EHCP:

- attendance is a feature of any needs review meeting and impact of needs not being met on attendance is discussed

At risk of Severe Absence

Children with attendance at 51-79% are at risk of severe absence. As this stage, a child is missing significant periods of time and a review of current support is required.

When a child's absence is at risk of severe, the school should consider:

- reviewing all support to consider what is working and what is not
- a consultation with the attendance officer for the school (this must have taken place if legal proceedings is being considered)
- a consultation with the early help advisor
- alternative provision

For children who have a CiN or CP plan or are CiC

- attendance is a key feature of meetings and improved attendance is an action on the plan

For children with special needs, medical needs or an EHCP:

- bringing forward a review where non-attendance is a result of potential unmet need

Severe Absence

Children who are severely absent are attending for less than 50% of the sessions and therefore are at very high risk of further long term absences and exposure to safeguarding situations unless a concerted effort is made across all partners. Children with severe absence will be discussed as a priority at the termly Targeting School Meetings

Schools should consider:

- escalating through the EBSA pathway if all steps have been taken
- escalating with virtual school if child is CiC or has a social worker
- a consultation with Early Help to discuss whole family plan
- a prosecution for non-attendance if absence is unauthorised (following consultation with Attendance team)
- a safeguarding referral

The local authority should consider a case of neglect if absences continue to be unauthorised once all avenues of support including appropriate educational support or placements have been facilitated by schools and the local authority.

Attendance Governance and Monitoring

No one school, local authority service area or voluntary group will achieve the ultimate goal of improving the overall attendance of children in Lincolnshire, however together, through focussed, targeted implementation of approaches and the monitoring of these, we can achieve the goal of improved attendance and ultimately better outcomes for children.

MONITORING ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES ARE:

Schools:

- Daily accurate attendance data collection, regular data analysis, sharing of data via DfE data collection and at the Local Authority targeted school meetings
- Regular attendance focussed meetings held by school attendance team
- Information sharing with Governing Body and Trusts

Local authority:

- Use attendance data from all schools in the area to identify the pupil cohorts, schools, and neighbourhoods/ towns on which to focus efforts.
- Benchmarking against neighbouring local authorities (both geographic and statistical) and regional and national averages to identify trends.
- Use attendance data analysis to set a vision for improving attendance with tangible short and longer term aims for particular cohorts of pupils
- Virtual school – regularly monitor the attendance of children with a social worker
- Attendance focussed group to monitor progress of strategy and analyse data
- Report on attendance of specific groups to Senior Leadership Team

Improving attendance implementation plan 2023 to 2026

Action	Responsibility
Year One	
Introduction to approach training to schools, Children's Services and voluntary sector	School attendance team (SAT)
Cascading of training and implementation of change in practice within Children's Services	CS team managers
Development of new attendance team within the current inclusion and attendance team	Inclusion and attendance
Development of new targeting support meeting (TSM) team template to be used by all schools	School attendance team (SAT)
Identification of attendance champion in senior leadership team in schools	Schools
Development of School Attendance Policy in schools	Schools
Training for all LCC TSM leads on conducting meeting	SAT and SEND, education locality leads, PRT
Trial of targeting support meetings in Spring 2023	SAT and select schools
Full trial of TSM's in schools	SAT and all schools
Introduce Independent Schools to strategy	SAT and independent schools
Year Two	
Full year programme of TSM's in schools (one per term)	SAT and schools
Termly meetings for LCC TSM leads to monitor progress on school meetings	SAT and SEND, education locality leads, PRT
Complete TSM's with Independent schools	SAT and independent schools
Share attendance data for all schools	School attendance team (SAT)
Review training needs for schools	School attendance team (SAT)
Year Three	
Full year programme of TSM's in schools (one per year)	SAT and schools
Review LCC attendance priorities	SAT
Share attendance data for all schools	SAT
Review Improving Attendance strategy	SAT