



SIL Attendance Quality Mark Information booklet

January 2026





About the SIL Attendance Quality Mark

The SIL Attendance Quality Mark (AQM) is a prestigious recognition awarded to schools that demonstrate a comprehensive and effective approach to promoting and managing pupil attendance. This accolade underscores a school's commitment to ensuring that every student has consistent access to quality education, acknowledging the critical link between regular attendance and academic achievement.

Research by the Department for Education (DfE) highlights that students with attendance rates of **95%** or higher are significantly more likely to achieve strong GCSE results. Even modest improvements in attendance can lead to notable gains in attainment at both Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 levels.

The SIL AQM serves not only as a benchmark of excellence but also as a catalyst for continuous improvement, encouraging schools to refine their policies, engage with families, and implement innovative practices to support student attendance. By striving for this mark, schools affirm their dedication to the holistic development and success of their students.

Schools that have good attendance recognise that it is not a discrete piece of work but rather it is an integral part of the school's ethos and culture.

Absence from school can be one of the most complex areas to address, as it is often the symptom of other issues. Schools have the primary role in trying to identify the underlying causes of non-attendance.

In order to effect a change and improve overall attendance and reduce persistent absenteeism, it is essential for schools and local authority partners to provide well-coordinated, planned interventions at the earliest opportunity.

Good attendance is a learned behaviour; the most effective schools recognise the importance of developing good patterns of attendance from the outset.



Why complete the SIL AQM?

- Improve/increase whole school culture and ethos.
- Improve and update staff training.
- Quality assure the graduated, support first, inclusive practice in your setting.
- Prepare for inspection.

Ofsted's education inspection framework (November 2025) reflects the national priority status that attendance has, with schools expected to:

- Demonstrate strategic leadership in attendance.
- Show inclusive practices that support all learners.
- Build strong partnerships with families to tackle barriers.
- Promote a culture of belonging and high expectations.

The SIL Attendance Quality Mark will serve as evidence of a school's commitment and progress in these areas.

Quality Mark Criteria

The assessment criteria are grouped under seven key themes. School leaders are tasked to identify and assign relevant pieces of evidence to the criteria and through a self-assessment process, decide which award level (*emerging, embedded, transformational*) they are currently working at.

School should identify a level (*emerging, embedded, transformational*) and complete the evidence criteria booklet for that section. (If school is evaluating as *embedded*, then the *emerging* section does not have to be evidenced).

The AQM criteria have been designed to help schools to evaluate their strategies to improve attendance and reduce persistent absence. It is expected the criteria will help identify strengths and areas for development that will support future planning in improving the attendance agenda.

It is important that you complete the self-evaluation in the context of your school. You will need to apply and interpret the criteria in the context of your own setting.



A copy of this completed AQM evidence and supporting evidence should be emailed to the assessor at least 5 working days before your assessment visit. During the visit, the external assessor will be able to review the evidence with school leadership, and an award will be agreed.

This accreditation will provide school with a written report, certificate and logo for use on your letterheads/website.

Making a difference from day one: Top Tips

- Ensure every member of staff in the school is aware of their responsibilities in relation to attendance.
- Make all staff aware that attendance is a safeguarding issue and should be prioritised at the earliest point in the day.
- Carry out training and produce "user friendly" guidance so that all staff are giving the right messages.
- First day response must happen every day for all pupils. Robust, tenacious first response supports and prevents further absence.
- Identify one aspect of absence that you are going to resource with staff and time in the short term to have a big impact, for example:
 - Preventative meetings for PA pupils *"How can school support you to ensure your child is in school every day?"*
 - SLT to meet every PA parent
 - Home visits
 - Increased capacity in the pastoral team
- Be supportive, be consistent, no excuses, be firm with high expectations.
- Do not tolerate poor punctuality but understand the lived experiences of all children.
- Be honest and clear with parents and do not shy away from difficult conversations. Challenge the culture that disadvantages your pupils.
- Welcome every pupil back with a smile and help them catch up emotionally and academically.



Key Theme 1: Policy Documentation	
Reflective Questions - Policy Documentation	
<i>1. Is improving attendance evident in the School Development Plan and consistent with wider aims and aspirations?</i>	
<i>2. Are Governors informed and involved in the development of attendance and absence processes/procedures within school?</i>	
<i>3. Is there an agreed whole-school approach to the promotion of improving attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism?</i>	
<i>4. Is there evidence to demonstrate the policy documents translate to clear processes and procedures for supporting attendance?</i>	
Possible sources of evidence	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Self Evaluation Form (SEF)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School stepped letters
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Development Plan (SDP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Newsletters
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Post inspection action planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff Surveys / Questionnaires
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School Attendance Policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff Absence Management



Key Theme 2: Leadership and Management of Attendance

Reflective Questions – Leadership and Management

1. *Is there clear evidence that the Headteacher is leading the Improving Attendance Agenda?*
2. *Are there sustainable strategies, actions and professional development involving all staff?*
3. *What evidence is there to ensure a consistent approach is adopted to improve whole school attendance?*
4. *What evidence is there of teachers acting as role models by promoting good attendance at work and school?*
5. *How are staff supported in keeping their knowledge updated?*
6. *Is the Headteacher/Attendance Lead regularly supported/challenged by their SIP/EIP/Attendance partner.*
7. *Have staff at all levels have attended relevant CPD?*
8. *Is there an agreed whole school approach to the promotion of improving attendance and reducing persistent absenteeism that staff are held accountable to?*
9. *Are pupil voice/pupil questionnaires used effectively to provide evidence?*
10. *Have all recommended actions following reviews/external audits been implemented?*

Possible sources of evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Development Plan (SDP) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School Attendance Policy
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit of staff skills and training needs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitoring Files
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CPD map / log 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interviews with staff
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • School website 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attendance action plans
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluation of impact of training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of meetings /briefings
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Minutes of staff meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reports following internal and external reviews
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ofsted reports 	



Key Theme 3: Effectiveness of Strategies to Improve Attendance and Reduce PA

Reflective Questions – Effectiveness of Strategies

1. *Do all admin staff/attendance officers/heads of year/ pastoral leads give the same message? Script? First response flow chart?*
2. *Do procedures work to prevent future absence?*
3. *Is there a support first culture evident during first response process?*
4. *Is there evidence that staff knowledge regarding absence procedures is regularly revisited/refreshed?*
5. *Is there impact/outcome data to demonstrate strategies are improving attendance and reducing PA?*
6. *How is good practice identified and shared across the school/Network/Trust etc...?*
7. *Is there evidence that strategies are improving attendance rates for all pupils including vulnerable cohorts?*

Possible sources of evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flow charts/process/procedures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions following observations
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clarity cards - roles and responsibilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal and external review reports
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible performance management targets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact data
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audits 	



Key Theme 4: Engagement with Stakeholders - Working with External Agencies

Reflective Questions – Engagement

1. *How are pupils and families with attendance issues engaged as part of the transition arrangements?*
2. *What evidence is there of planned events to promote attendance?*
3. *How is attendance embedded into key events with parents and pupils across the school year?*
4. *How are community relationships supporting the school to improve attendance and punctuality?*
5. *How well are external resources used to support pupils and families with attendance issues?*
6. *Are the school results analysed by attendance % and used to demonstrate the impact on achievement?*

Possible sources of evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Calendar of events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil tracking data
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluation of events	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Resources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School website
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff / departmental meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Case studies
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Parent and pupil voice



Key Theme 5: Use of Data

Reflective Questions – Use of Data

1. Do staff and leaders at all levels, including Governors understand the school profile of attendance against national expectations?
2. Is data informing actions and evaluation of impact of those actions, rather than just being analysed and presented?
3. Do key staff (e.g. SENDCo, PP lead) have a clear profile of the absence and PA data in their area of responsibility and know what actions they should be taking as a result?
4. Is data used to review the impact of intervention and actions and as a result, resources and activities are changed?
5. Is key data such as percentage bands used to identify and drive strategy?
6. Is individual data used daily to identify barriers so that intervention can be made at the earliest point?

Possible sources of evidence

<ul style="list-style-type: none">• School data profile	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Governor and SLT minutes
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• DfE 'View Your data' summary report and similar schools' comparison report	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Intervention evidence and impact
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explore education statistics/comparative data	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Action plans for PA pupils
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Pupil, staff and parent voice	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• SIP reports



Key Theme 6: Whole-School Culture, Ethos and Inclusivity

Reflective Questions – Whole-School Culture, Ethos and Inclusivity

1. *Does the whole school culture and ethos support good/improving attendance?*
2. *Is the whole school quality of provision evaluated with attendance in mind?*
3. *Is every pupil welcomed back from absence and supported to catch up on the lost learning?*
4. *Is staff absence managed robustly and so is a model for pupils and parents?*
5. *Is action taken if the quality of teaching is impacting on pupil attendance?*
6. *How well are personalised pathways developed for pupils who have significant attendance issues?*
7. *How innovative has the school been to re-engage non- attenders in any aspect of education or school life?*
8. *Is school attendance information used in pupil learning experiences?*

Possible sources of evidence

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|-----------------------------|--|
| • Curriculum plans | • Absence data for vulnerable groups |
| • Staff absence information | • Evidence of escalation to other agencies |
| • Pupil case studies | • SENDCo action plan |



Key Theme 7: Improving Punctuality

Reflective Questions – Improving Punctuality

1. *Is there a clear policy or expectation communicated to staff/students regarding punctuality?*
2. *Are start times consistently enforced across all departments or groups?*
3. *How is punctuality tracked (e.g., sign-in systems, registers, digital logs)?*
4. *Are late arrivals recorded accurately and consistently?*
5. *Are there systems in place to support individuals who struggle with punctuality?*
6. *Are punctuality issues followed up with appropriate interventions or conversations?*
7. *Do leaders and staff model punctual behaviour?*
8. *Is punctuality valued and promoted as part of the organizational culture?*
9. *Are individuals or groups recognised for consistent punctuality?*
10. *Have punctuality rates improved over time? If so, what strategies contributed to this?*
11. *What impact does poor punctuality have on learning, productivity, or team dynamics?*
12. *Are punctuality trends analysed to inform planning or policy changes?*

Possible sources of evidence

- Attendance policy (includes punctuality)
- Punctuality data analysis
- Graduated response flowchart for punctuality

