



February 2024

email: Allison.Cain@si.liverpool.gov.uk
Carolyn.Harkness@si.liverpool.gov.uk
cme@liverpool.gov.uk
twitter: [@SIL_Attendance](https://twitter.com/SIL_Attendance)

Attendance E-Briefing

FAO Headteachers, Governors, Designated Attendance Leads and key professionals


In this briefing:

- A message from the team. Progress can be seen!
- Update on "Working Together Guidance" May 2022.
- "Moments Matter, Attendance counts" - DfE campaign Jan'24
- EWS updates
- Key actions for spring term
- Spring briefing dates
- Template attendance policies 2023/24
- An update from EHE
- Educational neglect-LCSP
- DfE guidance- mild illness and school attendance
- ASCL- Association of School and College Leaders Conference. Presentation at Liverpool ACC.



A message from the team

Good news! There has been some progress!

School Absence Autumn/Spring 2022/23 

Overall absence
All schools - 7.9% - (national 7.3%) 0.6% variance
Primary - 6% - (national 6%)
Secondary - 10% - (national 8.7%) 1.3% variance
Special - 12.7% (national 13.2%) 0.5% variance
Ranking - 137 /152

Persistent absence
All schools - 23% - (national 21.2%) reduced by 1.0% 1.8% Variance
Primary -17.9% (national 17.3%) 0.6% variance
Secondary - 28.4% - (national 25.2%) variance 3.2%
Special - 36.9% (national 39.1%) variance 2.2%
Ranking - 118 /152

Severe absence
All schools - 2.4% national 1.9% variance 0.5% increased by 0.2% across all sectors combined.
Primary - 0.4% - (national 0.7%) 0.3% variance
Secondary - 4.7% - (national 3.1%) 1.6% variance
Special - 4.8% (national 6.1%) 1.3% Variance
Ranking - 141 /152

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Progress! Autumn term '22 Autumn term '23

Sector	Autumn term 2022/23 Census data	Autumn term 2023/24 Capita data	Improvement
Primary			
ABS %	6.2	5.6	0.6
PA %	20.3	17.4	2.9
Secondary			
ABS %	10.0	9.9	0.1
PA %	30.4	27.9	2.5
Special			
ABS %	12.8	11.8	1
PA %	39.1	34.2	4.9

Working together to improve school attendance (May 2022)

This guidance did not become statutory from September 2023 – it's anticipated that the date is now September 2024

DFE Guidance 6th May 2022



On 6 May 2022, the Department for Education released new non-statutory guidance "[Working together to improve school attendance](#)" to help schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance and improve consistency of support.

Did not become statutory but is the sole guidance.

[This guidance has replaced all previous guidance.](#)

Attendance Delivery Group

Chaired by Mike McSorley (Interim Director of Education) this group consists of leaders and representatives from all relevant agencies. This group is responsible for developing the local authority's strategic approach to improving attendance, in response to the Department for Education Working Together to Improve School Attendance Guidance.

School representatives:

- Secondary* Julie Taylor, Headteacher, The Belvedere Academy
- Primary* Lesley Roach, Headteacher, Rice Lane Primary School
Laura Hancox, Deputy Headteacher, Four Oaks Primary School
- Special* Juliette Gelling, Headteacher, Bankview School
Cath Piercy, Headteacher, Childwall Abbey School



Please contact either Carolyn Harkness or your school representative if you wish to discuss anything. Further information and updates will be shared at the spring briefings.

Early Help Attendance Project

The DFE is funding a project to support improving school attendance in the city. The project is aimed at improving persistent absenteeism and will be delivered to a focussed group of schools.

The project has been commissioned until March 2025.

The Early Help Service will provide some additional capacity to support children and young people who are persistently absent. Two additional teams have been created on a pilot basis. The first team is funded by DFE and will go live on the 30 of January 2024. The second team is expected to go live in the first week of February.

The Team Around the Family (TAF) approach will be used to create multi-agency plans, with the aim of removing barriers to school attendance.

Schools will be a key agency in the TAF and will contribute to all reviews and plans. If appropriate, families referred to the Education Welfare Service can also be included in the project. The EWO will be invited to support the TAF.

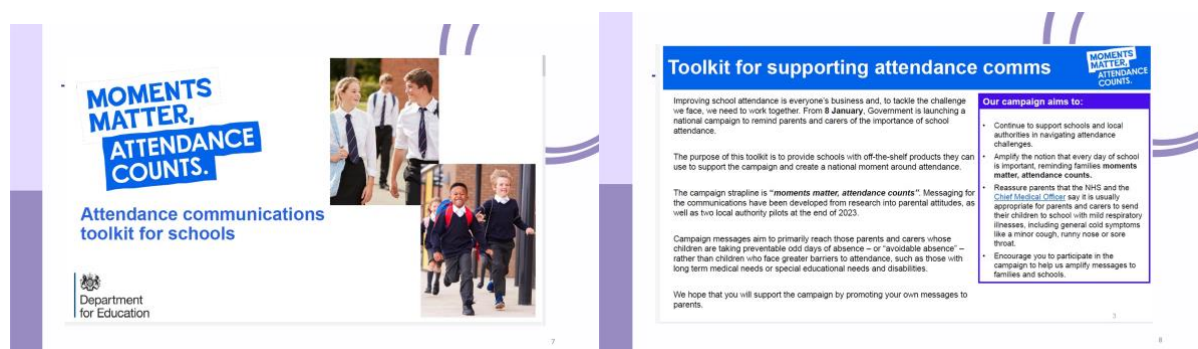
Schools included in this project attended a meeting at Toxteth Annexe on Thursday 1 February.

"Moments Matter, Attendance Counts"

A national communications campaign about the importance of attendance was launched on 8 January 2024 - targeting parents and carers.

Under the strapline *'Moments Matter, Attendance Counts'* it outlines the importance of attendance for attainment, wellbeing, and development as well as signposting to advice for further support.

The toolkit can be found here: [Moments Matter, Attendance Counts'](#)





Avoidable Absences - Key Points

Publicity around **avoidable absence** builds upon our city strategy of working to improve margin data.

- This absence is often not complex and can be improved by strengthening school systems and process.
- Mild illness-Designated Attendance Lead (DAL) should be sharing this with parents and staff.
- <https://www.nhs.uk/live-well/is-my-child-too-ill-for-school>
- All schools should use the publicity materials.
- Remember this is a support first model - good relationships are key.

Please print out/post/ and use all posters available and share the "Is my child too ill for school?" guidance as widely as possible.

Key actions for Spring term 2024

- Maximise the impact of the DfE campaign by focussing on "avoidable absence".
- Focus on the 92% -95% band. Consider: Within this group, there are many pupils who have had absence of 92% for multiple years. Has avoidable absence been previously authorised? Has the child's absence historically been at the margins of PA?
- Identify odd days at the earliest possible point using individual registration certificates.
- Act to prevent further odd days of absence by meeting/communicating with parents.
- Preventative meetings offering support are a high impact strategy- meetings should be built into your weekly process.
- Book an Attendance Review with Carolyn.harkness@si.liverpool.gov.uk
- Analyse and act upon absence and PA in Reception during spring 2.
- Attend spring briefings and book training.
- Target margin data!

DfE Attendance Hubs

The Beacon C of E Primary is to become a Hub school for Liverpool.

- The aim of the 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 attendance.
- The programme is intended for senior leaders with oversight of attendance.
- Commitment from partner schools to engage and make changes to improve their practice is expected for 12–18 months.
- The DfE has stated that there will be 18 new attendance hubs across 6 regions, bringing the total to 32 and will see nearly 2,000 schools helped to tackle persistent absence.
- From direct pupil engagement initiatives like breakfast clubs and extracurricular activities, to improving their processes and analysis of attendance data, lead hub schools provide a range of support to schools that they can tailor to their pupils and families.



Point of contact for advice and guidance (EWS)

The Education Welfare helpline is available to all schools, multi agencies and parents and is available 9am -5pm weekdays. Contact the service on 0151 233-3916

There is also a central inbox for EWS ewshelpline@si.liverpool.gov.uk for general enquiries and for schools who do not have a single point of contact.

Your EWO should continue to be your professional point of contact for all coding questions if you have an SLA.

If you do not have an SLA with the EWS service submit PNW requests etc. to this email address.

Spring Briefings and Training

Primary Briefing

- Tuesday 20 February (Dingle, Granby, Toxteth) 1.30-3.30, Smithdown Primary
- Wednesday 21 February (Fiveways) 1.30-3.30, Knotty Ash Primary
- Thursday 22 February (South Liverpool Learning Network) 1.30-3.30, Belle Vale Primary
- Wednesday 28 February (North Liverpool Learning Network) 1.30-3.30, Wellesbourne Primary School
- Thursday 29 February (G10) 1.30-3.30, Belle Vale Primary School
- Friday 1 March (West Derby Learning Network) 1.30-3.30, Mab Lane Primary School
- Tuesday 5 March (Link Learning Network) 1.30-3.30, Everton Children's Centre

There is no need to book- just turn up!

Briefings are planned in advance with your network coordinators. It is expected that a representative from each school will attend – but if this is not possible, please attend another session.

Secondary Briefing:

Wednesday 6 March- Secondary Attendance Briefing 1.15-3.15pm Toxteth Annexe

[Book via the SIL website.](#)

Special Briefing:

Thursday 14th March-Special Attendance Briefing 2-4pm Toxteth Annexe. This has been pre booked for all special school headteachers as requested.

Governor training:

There will be an increased focus on the governance of attendance in the northwest from spring 2024.

Wednesday 17th April 10-12pm at Toxteth Annexe

Wednesday 17th April 6-8pm via Teams

[Book via Governor Hub](#) or via the Governors Services Team.



Policies

Template Primary and Secondary Attendance policies can be found [here](#) - Special schools please use the most appropriate policy for your setting

Please ensure you are logged into the SIL website before downloading documents.

EHE Policy can be found [here](#).

CME Policy can be found [here](#).

Attendance management Plan 2023 can be found [here](#).

EWS Referral form 2023 can be found [here](#).

Penalty notice referral form can be found [here](#).

Elective Home Education-update

It is now estimated that 97,600 pupils are educated at home in England (census data summer '23).

There has been a significant increase in the number of children being home educated.

The EHE Team has dealt with 811 applications since September 2023 leading to 628 children now being home educated in Liverpool.

As soon as school become aware that a family is considering EHE contact the EHE team for advice, guidance and an informal discussion.

Section 19

Section 19 of the Education Act 1996 places a duty on LAs to make suitable alternative education for children of compulsory school age who cannot attend school because of illness, exclusion or for any other reason.

Joanne Hall presented information at autumn briefings and will provide further updates before the end of the school year – you can get in touch with Joanne at: joanne.hall@liverpool.gov.uk

Data team (LCC)

In order for the LA to accurately track data, all schools must supply their weekly transfer of information.

The data team would like to kindly remind all schools that even though signed up to WONDE (DfE data collection) the B2B still needs to be sent weekly.



DfE Guidance on mild illness and when children can attend school.

Please [read the DfE's guidance](#) which is useful for attendance admin staff to have on their desks when completing first response calls.

DfE Updates

An update on attendance with Ofsted and the DfE can be viewed at:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QryV8U7-mKY>

Educational neglect

The Liverpool definition of educational neglect has been revised for clarity. Following consultation at the Attendance Delivery Group meeting, it will be shared at the spring briefings.

ASCL Conference- Friday 8 March Liverpool ACC

We hope you can join us for our workshop – [“Attendance-There's no time like the present!”](#)

Three Learning Outcomes:

1. How to respond to the “Working Together” guidance.
2. Process and procedures that really work.
3. Sustained consistent improvement from good process.

North Liverpool Academy and Banks Road Primary will be joining Carolyn Harkness to present their improving attendance journeys.



Thank you all again for your determination to improve attendance and outcomes for the children and young people of Liverpool.

Carolyn Harkness and Allison Cain