Best Practice

Department for Education: Working together to improve school attendance

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.

Some pupils find it harder than others to attend school and therefore at all stages of improving attendance, schools and partners should work with pupils and parents to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place.

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.

Best Practice Ideas Shared at the Attendance Network Meetings

Incentives
Therapy dog
Praise postcards
Golden Tickets
Extra football/scooter slots/playtime
Weekly breakfasts
Y5/Y6 Greeters/Buddies
Weekend teddy and journal
Art and Wellbeing clubs
Fairground
School Council
Active and engaging play time
Rosettes
Termly Bingo
Points/Credits/Merits
Choco Lotto
Reward charts
Raffle

Public Praise
Celebration Assembly
Cohort focus group praised for attendance/improvement
League tables
Form motivation and praise

Relationships
Home visits
Wrap-around care
Welcoming with no judgement
TLC Board
Consideration behind asking for medical evidence
Snack Shack and Bacon Butty Fridays
Coffee mornings

Further questions?
Refer to Schoolsnet for additional information, or email attendance@gloucestershire

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Top Tips
Dig deeper
Understanding families' history and dynamics
Flexibility and modification
Providing resources for families
Personal touch
Trusted adult for pupil and family
Alternative entrances/start times/play areas
Encourage later attendance in the day than miss out altogether
Translator apps
Bus passes and taxis
Ensure children feel safe and heard

Communication
Starter packs include attendance information
Informal Attendance 'Raise' Meetings
Updates and newsletters on attendance matters
Sharing GCC and NHS information
Information on school app
Positive emails home
Texts
Calls
Emails

Information
Recognise and address patterns, including with siblings (including across schools)
Rigorous monitoring
Following attendance policy
Coffee mornings with Early Help and other agencies
Data sharing and reviewing trends
Signposting to other agencies

Staffing and Training
Welcoming
Curious
Caring
Clear notes
PSHE Toolkit
Adaptive teaching
Attractive curriculum
Work with feeder schools

Response
Robust discussions with family
ELSA
Plan support
Family Support Workers
My Plans
Graduated Response
Early Help
Welfare checks
Parenting Contracts
AIMs
Education Supervision Orders
Penalty Notices
Legal Intervention

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