

Attendance Network Meetings

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Attendance responsibilities in schools

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Responsibilities Within a School

The Headteacher and Attendance Champion hold overall operational responsibility for driving high attendance across the school

Key responsibilities include:

- **Leading a whole-school culture** that promotes the benefits of good attendance and embeds it within the school ethos
- **Ensuring the school has a clear, accessible attendance policy**, understood by all staff, pupils, parents and carers
- **Making sure registers are accurately completed**, maintained daily, and that absence is followed up effectively
- **Overseeing attendance systems and data analysis**, identifying pupils and cohorts requiring support
- **Ensuring staff are trained** in attendance expectations and effective practice
- **Building strong relationships with families**, understanding barriers to attendance and ensuring early intervention
- **Coordinating work with external partners** (e.g., Local Authority, social care, health, other schools)

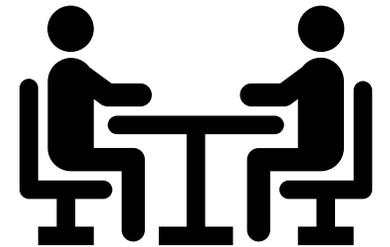


Responsibilities Within a School

SLT supports the Headteacher and Attendance Champion to ensure consistent implementation across the school.

Key responsibilities include:

- **Monitoring attendance trends in their remit**, such as year groups or vulnerable cohorts.
- **Supporting pastoral and safeguarding responses**, particularly for pupils with mental health issues, SEND, or physical ill health.
- **Ensuring curriculum, behaviour and pastoral systems** support engagement and reduce barriers to attendance, as the guidance stresses attendance cannot be separated from wider school practice.
- **Liaising with the Attendance Champion** and ensuring staff apply attendance processes consistently.

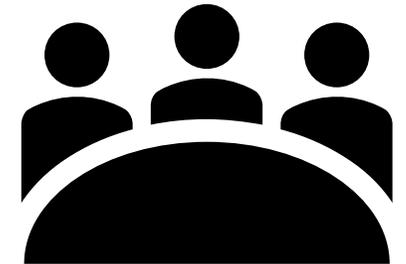


Responsibilities Within a School

Attendance Officer - Often a dedicated role, this person manages daily attendance processes

Key responsibilities include:

- **Daily monitoring of registers**, ensuring accuracy and following up absence promptly.
- **Analysing attendance data regularly**, identifying concerns early and escalating pupils approaching persistent absence thresholds (10%+).
- **Coordinating targeted interventions**, including attendance plans, meetings, and multi-agency work.
- **Maintaining strong communication with families**, ensuring contact is supportive and solution-focused.
- **Preparing information for LA referrals**, including for fixed penalty notices, NTIs and contacting Inclusion Officer/LOLiE, when needed.



Responsibilities Within a School

Form Tutors/Class Teachers

Front-line staff are critical to attendance because of their relationship with pupils

Form Tutors/Class Teachers

Front-line staff are critical to attendance because of their relationship with pupils

Key responsibilities include:

- **Taking the register accurately** and on time, in line with school expectations.
- **Noticing patterns of absence** and reporting concerns promptly to the attendance lead or pastoral staff.
- **Maintaining positive relationships with pupils**, helping them feel safe, valued, and engaged. The guidance emphasises attendance as linked to curriculum and wellbeing.
- **Communicating with parents** at an early stage where absence patterns emerge (in line with school policy).
- **Supporting reintegration plans** for pupils returning after long absence.



Responsibilities Within a School

Pastoral staff

These roles address barriers to attendance beyond the classroom

Key responsibilities include:

- **Identifying underlying needs**, such as SEND, mental health, family stressors, poverty, bullying, or safeguarding concerns.
- **Providing or coordinating early help** and targeted support, including attendance action plans or multi-agency referrals.
- **Working directly with families**, often undertaking home visits, mentoring, or check-ins.
- **Supporting pupils with emotionally-based school avoidance (EBSNA) or anxiety-related barriers.**



Responsibilities Within a School

SENCo

Attendance guidance highlights that pupils with SEND or health needs require tailored support

Key responsibilities include:

- **Ensuring attendance issues are explored** as part of SEND assessments and reviews.
- **Coordinating reasonable adjustments**, personalised timetables (where appropriate), and supportive interventions.
- **Liaising with external professionals** such as health, CAMHS, EPs, and LA SEND teams.
- **Monitoring attendance of pupils with EHCPs or on SEN Support**, ensuring barriers are understood

Responsibilities Within a School

Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL)

Given the strong link between safeguarding and attendance, the DSL has key statutory duties

Key responsibilities include:

- **Responding to safeguarding concerns arising from non-attendance**, including missing-from-education cases.
- **Ensuring attendance patterns feature in safeguarding assessments** and multi-agency meetings.
- **Overseeing systems for pupils with a social worker**, as local authorities monitor this group closely.
- **Ensuring statutory notifications** occur when a child disappears from roll or is missing.

Responsibilities Within a School

Governors/Academy Trustees

Governance has strategic oversight, not operational responsibility

Key responsibilities include:

- **Promoting the importance of attendance** across school policies and ethos.
- **Challenging and supporting school leaders** to fulfil statutory duties.
- **Regularly reviewing attendance data**, focusing on vulnerable groups and challenging trends.
- **Ensuring staff receive appropriate training** and that policies are up to date and compliant

10 mins - Discussion....

All Staff

The guidance is explicit that attendance is ***everybody's business***

Key responsibilities include:

- **Promoting good attendance** through their daily interactions
- **Providing a welcoming, safe environment** that supports belonging and engagement.
- **Noticing and reporting concerns** promptly.
- **Contributing to the whole-school ethos**, curriculum, behaviour, and wellbeing strategies that underpin strong attendance.

Thinking about the responsibilities of all staff – How does your school do this? What could you do to improve this?

'We don't need everyone doing the same thing, but we do need everyone delivering the core expectations to the same standard'



DfE Working Together to Improve School Attendance

- **Attendance is everyone's responsibility** – reinforces multi-agency collaboration
- **“Support first, enforcement last”** – early help, relational approaches, and unmet needs identification should lead practice
- **Stronger expectations on data use** – schools should analyse patterns for vulnerable cohorts weekly (SEND, social care involvement, FSM, EAL newly arrived pupils)
- **Escalation pathways must be clear and applied consistently** – school → inclusion/early help → LA statutory routes
- **Emphasis on trust building with families** – personalised outreach, not automated processes



What schools are doing well

- Improved **communication with families** through pastoral teams and informal conversations
- Growing confidence in **using attendance codes correctly** and identifying patterns earlier
- Better **collaboration with Early Help**—more referrals are timely and focused on barriers
- Stronger **cross-school learning**, especially around reintegration and anxiety-based avoidance

These positive trends help schools feel the system is moving forward

Consider these statements:

- Thresholds for early intervention vary widely – this creates inequity for children
- Some schools are still relying on letters rather than conversations
- Support/My Plans and attendance action plans are inconsistent in quality and follow up
- Use of attendance data is improving but still not embedded in all schools' SLT routines

How do they apply in your setting and what can be done to tighten consistency across Gloucestershire?



Questions?

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