

Working in Partnership to Improve Attendance 2025/2026

Education Welfare Service September 2025



September 2025

Working in Partnership to Improve School Attendance

This document outlines how Barnsley Education Welfare Service collaborates with schools, academies, and partner agencies in accordance with the Working Together to Improve Attendance 2024 statutory guidance. It sets out the shared practices that underpin our collective vision and co-produced plan: Every Child in School Every Day.

How Barnsley Local Authority will work with Schools and Academies

Barnsley has placed attendance and inclusion high on its agenda and believes that all children should be engaged in an education that helps them to thrive and reach their full potential. We see inclusion in education as a positive and protective factor and all agencies working with children are expected to understand the importance of attendance and engagement in education. Where there is a barrier, we will work with you, the child, and the family to ensure attendance and inclusion forms part of the child's support plan. To help you navigate the most appropriate and timely support for families, Barnsley's threshold for intervention can be found [here](#) our early help offer can be found [here](#) and the Access to Education guidance can be found on the Education Welfare Service website. These documents will help you identify the needs of the child, and the most appropriate support required.

Barnsley Schools Alliance, Education Strategy believes, whatever their background or circumstances, Barnsley children and young people deserve the most positive educational experience to achieve their full potential. The education strategy is underpinned by four core principles.

- To champion world class education opportunities for all children, young people, and families ensuring we meet the needs of vulnerable and disadvantaged groups of children and young people.
- To secure high quality inclusive provision, widen local opportunities and promote equality.
- To continue to strengthen Barnsley's system-wide school (led) improvement, working closely with key partners.
- To promote, safeguard and improve our children and young people's mental and physical health and wellbeing and to recognise that this ultimately underpins the ability for us to achieve all other priorities.

To strengthen the partnership and to create a shared vision for inclusion, Barnsley schools Alliance has co-produced with leaders from our multi academy trusts, the 'Every Child in School Every Day' action plan. This action plan focuses on children regularly attending school-based learning; "every child in school every day". The success and impact of this plan will be measured on any reduction in the number of suspensions and exclusions issued by schools, reduced numbers of families choosing Elective Home Education, improved overall attendance and improved education outcomes.

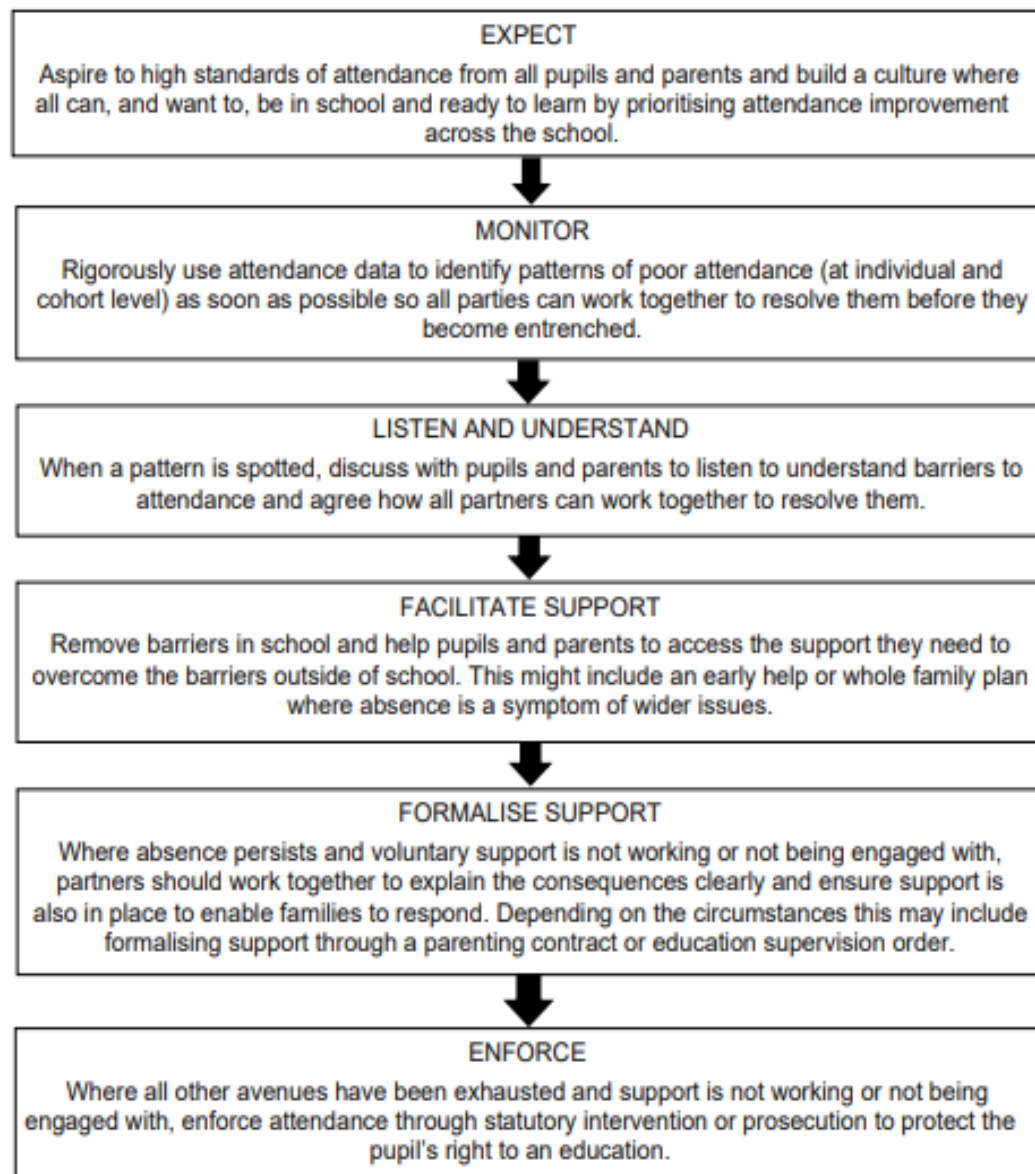
The Education Welfare Service provides half-termly attendance and inclusion data to the Barnsley Schools Alliance and headteachers. This data supports informed dialogue and constructive peer challenge, ensuring that schools and academies deliver high-quality, inclusive provision that safeguards and meets the needs of all children and young people. It also serves as a key measure of progress against the objectives set out in the 'Every Child in School Every Day' plan.

The Education Welfare Service aims to communicate effectively with schools and academies. Updates on the latest developments can be found through our school hub. Colleagues can sign up [here](#). This page will also link into the [schools hub](#).

Working together to improve attendance

To understand and resolve the root causes of absence and remove barriers to attendance, schools, partners, and families must work together.

In Barnsley through partnership working, we will:



Attendance and inclusion **are** everyone's **responsibility**; there are specific statutory responsibilities placed on schools and the LA outlined below with links to the LA policy and procedure.

Responsibilities for Attendance School and Academies- Attendance

Support First is a clear expectation of DfE guidance and schools must be able to evidence that they:

Build strong relationships and work jointly with families, listen to and understand the barriers to attendance and work in partnership with families to remove them. Good attendance starts with close and productive relationships with parents and pupils.

Treat all pupils and parents with dignity and staff should model respectful relationships to build a positive relationship between home and school that can be the foundation of good attendance.

In working in partnership with parents, schools should discuss the link between attendance and attainment and wider wellbeing, and challenge parents' views where they have misconceptions about what 'good' attendance looks like.

Where a pupil or family needs support with attendance, it is important that the person best placed in the school can work consistently alongside and support the family.

Where a pattern of absence is problematic or at risk of becoming an issue, schools should draw on these relationships to understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, schools should take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

Supporting pupils and parents by working together to address any in-school barriers to attendance. Where barriers are outside of the school's control, all partners should work together to support pupils and parents to access any support they may need voluntarily. As a minimum, this should include meeting with pupils at risk of persistent or severe absence and their parents to understand any barriers to being in school and agree actions or interventions to address them. This may include referrals to services and organisations that can provide support. These actions should be regularly discussed and reviewed together with pupils and families.

Implement effective systems and procedures for encouraging regular school attendance, meeting the requirements of Working Together to Improve School Attendance 2024 (DfE). Creating a culture in school where attendance is everyone's responsibility, and all pupils are encouraged to attend and achieve. DfE guidance and toolkits to support can be found [here](#)

Monitor attendance regularly and investigate underlying causes of irregular school attendance by speaking with pupils and parents to capture reasons and facilitate support. These procedures should be clearly specified within the school/academy Attendance Policy. A model school policy can be found [here](#) on the Education Welfare Service Website.

Comply with statutory regulations in Working Together to Improve Attendance, which includes the need to maintain accurate attendance and admission registers in accordance with *The Education (Pupil Registration - England) Regulations 2024*.

Work in partnership with the LA and other partners to share data about individual pupils to ensure that pupils and families are receiving the appropriate support to engage in education. In Barnsley, the EWS will meet with the Attendance lead for the school or academy at least termly to review the

data, provide advice and guidance and implement any actions. Additional input from colleagues in the EHC Team, a representative from Youth Justice and when appropriate the Education Link in the Integrated Front Door will offer an extra layer of partnership working.

Responsibilities of schools and academies - Children Missing Education

Where the school or academy has not been able to confirm the location of the pupil by following their absence procedures, they should no later than the 10th school day, follow the *Children Missing Education (CME) policy*. This can be found under useful resources at www.barnsley.gov.uk/education-welfare-service.

If after jointly making reasonable enquiries with the local authority, the school or academy has failed to ascertain the whereabouts of the pupil and the pupil has been absent for a *minimum of 20 school days*, the school or academy can remove the pupil's name from its admission register, in line with the CME policy. However, confirmation must be obtained by the Education Welfare Service before removing the pupil's name from the school roll. The academy must act in accordance with the *Education Pupil Registration Regulations 2024*.

Schools and Academies must inform the EWS when they are about to remove a pupil's name from the admission register under any of the *fifteen grounds listed in regulations 1 (Annex A)*. This does not apply when a pupil's name is removed from the admission register at standard transition points. *Annex A can be found on the Children Missing Education policy (CME)*.

Schools and Academies must notify Education Welfare Service within five days of adding a pupil's name to the admission register and must provide the Education Welfare Service with all the information held within the admission register about the pupil. *This duty does not apply to pupils who are added to the admission register at the start of the school's youngest year* – for example pupils who are registered at a secondary school at the start of Year 7.

Responsibilities of schools and academies - Pupils on reduced provision

Pupils who are missing out on education data collection. (Pupils who are on a school roll who are on a reduced provision). Schools and academies must complete the pupils missing out returns on a termly basis and return it to BusinessImprovement&Intelligence@barnsley.gov.uk (This is an Ofsted requirement)

For further information on reduced provision please refer to the access to education guidance. This can be found at www.barnsley.gov.uk/education-welfare-service

Responsibilities for schools and academies - Elective Home Education

If a parent chose to remove their child from the school roll and educate their child at home, they should be encouraged to inform the school/academy in writing. Schools and academies must then follow the EHE policy, which can be found [here](#). If the child and family are working with any other services such as Early Help/Children's Social Care or if the child has an EHCP, please inform the allocated worker at the point of notification to EHE@barnsley.gov.uk.

Responsibilities for Suspension and Exclusion

Schools must notify the LA of any suspensions or permanent exclusion, to support the child back into education. The LA has a legal responsibility to provide education on the Sixth day of exclusion. Notifications of suspension and exclusion should be sent to Exclusions@barnsley.gov.uk. The Access

to Education guidance outlines how to support children who are receiving suspensions and provides schools with the statutory guidance and framework to manage suspension and exclusion. This can be found at the Education Welfare Service website. Leaders from secondary schools and academies are encouraged to participate in the Early Intervention Panel where pupils who are finding engagement in education challenging can be discussed and cross sector intervention can be sought. Further details of this panel are outlined in our Access to Education Guidance.

Education Neglect Pathway

The Education Welfare Service has worked in partnership with Children's Social Care to create an Education Neglect Pathway which forms part of the wider Barnsley Neglect Strategy. This pathway should be used when early intervention fails to bring a sustained change to engagement in education. Discussion must take place with Education Welfare Service prior to a referral into Children's Social Care. We would expect that in cases where Educational Neglect is being considered a referral to the Education Welfare Service has been made and that there is evidence of early intervention to remove barriers to school attendance through partnership working. Where this intervention has failed to sustain regular attendance, Children's Social Care will consider an assessment. Parental consent should be obtained prior to Children's Social Care referral, or in cases where this has been refused, parents have been notified of the referral to the Integrated Front Door. Further information regarding the Education Neglect Pathway can be found on the Education Welfare Service website.

How will Education Welfare support schools and academies

The Education Welfare Service will lead the attendance and inclusion agenda through the Barnsley Schools Alliance, providing timely, benchmarked local data to support sector-wide collaboration through the Ever Child in School Everyday Plan. The service will fulfil statutory duties relating to Children Missing Education (CME), Elective Home Education (EHE), reduced provision, and exclusions. Termly meetings with senior attendance leaders in each setting will review attendance data, evaluate systems in place, and identify pupils requiring formal support, including legal intervention. These targeted support meetings will generate action plans, that will be reviewed termly to ensure effectiveness. Insights from these meetings will inform pupil level intervention, sector wide training plans and the sharing of good practice via the Barnsley Schools Alliance, the Early Intervention Panel and school hub bulletins.

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If you wish to discuss the information outlined in this booklet, please contact any of the following team members.

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