



# School Attendance Strategy

[fid.cumberland.gov.uk](https://fid.cumberland.gov.uk)

V1.0

## Contents

Introduction .....	3
The Legislation .....	4
What is our data telling us? .....	5
Moments Matter Attendance Counts – School Attendance Pledge .....	5
Graduated Approach to good school attendance .....	7
Working in Partnership .....	8

## Introduction

Why is consistent attendance at school crucial? Research indicates that maintaining excellent attendance at school plays a pivotal role in securing positive outcomes for children and young people. Missing classes leaves pupils susceptible to falling behind, resulting in gaps in their learning and a decline in self-confidence.

Establishing good attendance habits is essential from the early stages of education. It is observed that children regularly absent in the Reception class are more likely to exhibit poor attendance in secondary school. According to findings by Universities UK, children with poor attendance are five times less likely to achieve five strong passes at GCSE, hindering their prospects for higher education or employment.

Additionally, poor attendance at school is linked to adverse emotional health and well-being. Regularly absent children and young people may experience social isolation, lack confidence, and suffer from low self-esteem. Feelings of not fitting in with peers can lead to loneliness, and those who consistently miss school face an increased risk of engaging in anti-social behaviour or becoming victims of crime.

These are not the outcomes and experiences are not what we want for our children.

School is not solely about academic success and attainment; it encompasses learning about the world, building relationships, and discovering oneself. It involves trying new things, making friends, and finding one's place in the world.

To miss school is to miss the experiences that shape our choices, opportunities, and overall quality of life.

Evidence strongly suggests that children with regular school attendance achieve better outcomes, leading to healthier, wealthier, and more enriched lives.

We acknowledge that many children, families, and schools in Cumberland have excellent attendance. Cumberland Council are committed to learning from the existing good practice throughout our schools, actively learning from them and strengthening our existing partnerships for an even greater impact.

## The Legislation

The Department for Education (DfE) have released guidance to support stakeholders with school attendance. This guidance is statutory, and schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities must have regard to it as part of their efforts to maintain high levels of school attendance

The guidance should be read alongside the statutory guidance documents on children missing education, supporting pupils with medical conditions at school, education for children with health needs who cannot attend school, suspensions and exclusions, alternative provision, and Keeping Children Safe in Education.

[Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

[Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

Under this statutory guidance the local authority have the responsibility to:

- Have a strategic approach to improving attendance for the whole area and make it a key focus of all frontline council services.
- Have a School Attendance Support Team that works with all schools in their area to remove area-wide barriers to attendance.
- Provide each school with a named point of contact in the School Attendance Support Team who can support with queries and advice.
- Offer opportunities for all schools in the area to share effective practice.
- Build strong relationships and work collaboratively.
- Identify, discuss, and agree action plans and joint approaches for severely absent pupils (where they do not already have a plan in place).
- Discuss and agree approaches for persistently absent where they have barriers to attendance that require a multi-agency response to overcome.
- Agree which agency will act as lead practitioner, which will be the school in most cases, but can be a local authority or partner team where there are multiple needs are the most appropriate service.
- Where schools seek it, conduct data analysis, including comparisons to other schools in the geographical area or identify areas to focus attendance efforts on.

## What is our data telling us?

School attendance in Cumberland is currently slightly better than nationally. Pupils are absent less and there are fewer persistent and severely absent pupils than nationwide.

	<b>National</b>	<b>Cumberland</b>
Overall Absence	7.3	7.0
Persistently Absent - 10% or more sessions missed	21.2	19.7
Severely Absent - 50% or more sessions missed	1.9	1.8

March 2024

Whilst this picture seems promising, across the county, there are individual schools where the persistent absenteeism rate is more than 50% higher than national and severe absenteeism almost three times higher.

22% of schools have persistent absenteeism rates higher than national. These schools account for 57% of all persistently absent pupils.

14% of schools have severe absenteeism rates higher than national. These schools account for 82% of all severely absent pupils.

16 schools have rates of persistent absenteeism *and* severe absenteeism above national rates.

This tells us that whilst Cumberland's school attendance is positive overall, there is more work to be done to ensure consistency of practice across the county and improve equity of access to education.

This also tells us that targeted support for these schools will have the greatest impact on the number of children support.

## Moments Matter Attendance Counts – School Attendance Pledge

To support the Department for Education's communications campaign, Moments Matter Attendance Counts, a Cumberland School Attendance Pledge has been developed. The Cumberland School Attendance Pledge will be promoted by the local authority, with partners, across our local communities and in regularly attended locations to encourage good school attendance and empower individuals to take action.





HM Government



**MOMENTS  
MATTER,  
ATTENDANCE  
COUNTS.**



## Cumberland School Attendance Pledge

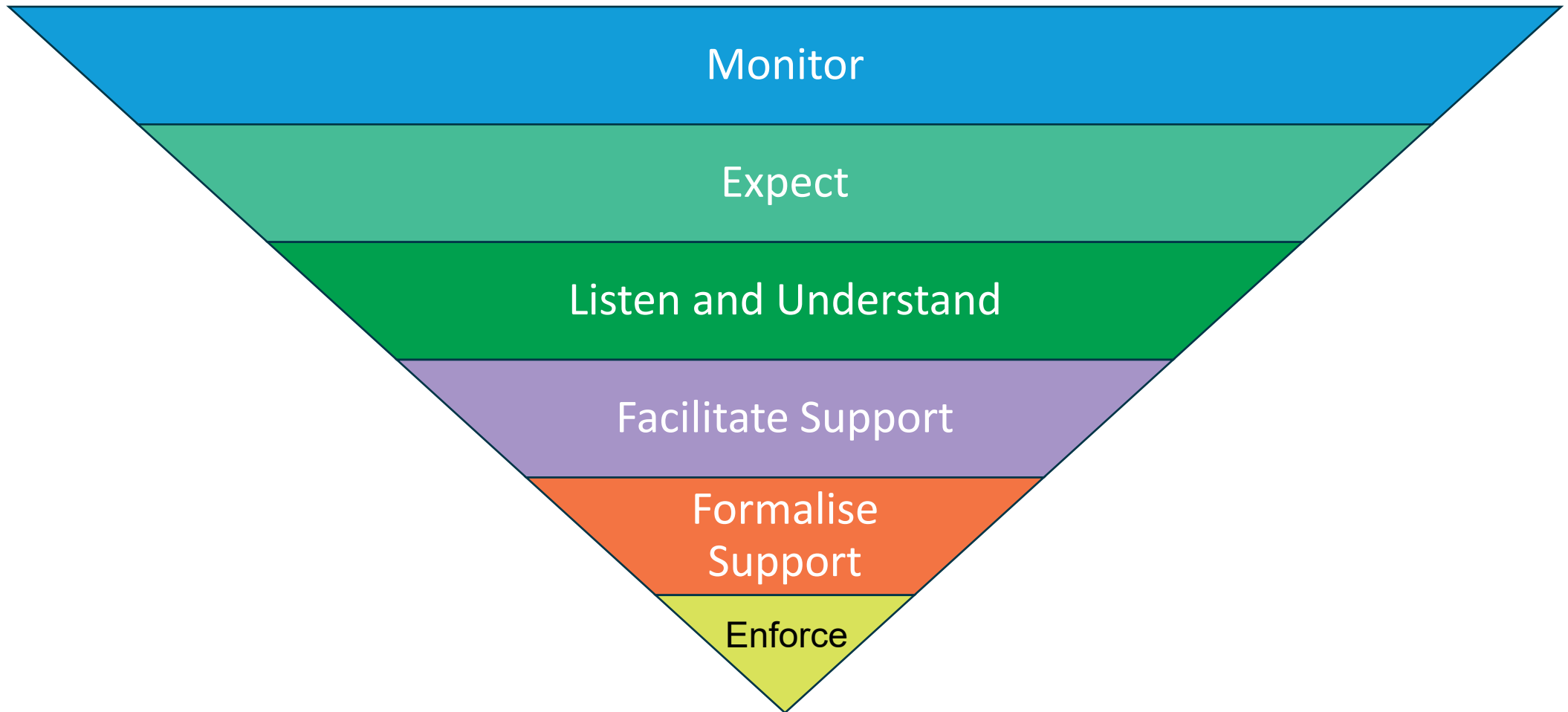
1. Making sure children/young people regularly attend school is the responsibility of everyone.
2. We are committed to working together to improve school attendance for children/young people across Cumberland.
3. We understand that attending school is crucial for everyone, and when students are absent, it could signal important safety concerns we need to address, particularly if they are a child missing education.
4. Barriers to school attendance can be complicated and come from a number of reasons within families, communities, and environments. We are committed to breaking down these barriers.
5. We will collaborate with each other to remove barriers to attendance. Parents and caregivers play a crucial role in this partnership.
6. We strongly support and promote excellent attendance and role-model this.
7. If we notice that children/young people are not in school during school hours, we will be professionally curious and query the reasons behind their absence.

Each partner has an important and distinct role in supporting the child or family, no one partner can do it on their own.



## Graduated Approach to good school attendance

Stakeholder responsibilities are outline in the [Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#).



## Working in Partnership

