

Supporting Good School Attendance

The Support-First Approach



Statutory guidance requires school and local authorities to monitor, identify and understand pupils' barriers to attendance as quickly as possible. Somerset's support-first approach aligns with the Department for Education's expectations, as follows:

Somerset's Approach		The DfE's Approach
Step 1 Universal Support	Aspire to high standards of attendance for all pupils and parents and build a culture where all can, and want to, be in school ready to learn by prioritising attendance improvement across the school.	Expect
	Rigorously use attendance data to identify patterns or poor attendance (at individual and cohort level) as soon as possible so all parties can work together to resolve them before they become entrenched.	Monitor
Step 2 School-Based Support	When a pattern is spotted, discuss with pupils and parents to listen and understand barriers to attendance and agree how all partners can work together to resolve them.	Listen and Understand
Step 3 Targeted Support	Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.	Facilitate Support
Step 4 Complex Support	Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract of education supervision order.	Formalise Support
Step 5 Statutory Interventions	Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the child's right to education.	Enforce