

Bath and North East Somerset Local Authority - Attendance Strategy 2025 - 2027

Children and young people will be well prepared for adult life, and we will listen to what they tell us, so they can influence change. (Children and Young People's Plan)

1. Vision for school attendance

This Attendance Strategy will help to make education outcomes for all BANES (Bath and North East Somerset) children and young people the best they can be. For this to happen children and young people need to attend school regularly, where they can access an education that is appropriate to their needs. This document sets out what we all need to do to achieve this vision. Education setting attendance is everyone's responsibility, and we must work together to achieve the best outcomes for all children and young people.

This strategy sits alongside: Children and Young Peoples Plan, Alternative Provision Strategy, SEND Collaboration and Virtual School Development Plan.

2. The importance of school attendance

It is recognised that attending school regularly can be a protective factor for children and young people. By not attending school regularly children and young people are leaving themselves vulnerable to risks which can reduce their life chances and future opportunities. There is evidence to suggest that regular school attendance is a key mechanism to support children and young people's educational, economic and social outcomes. Research by the DFE shows that:

- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS2, 83.9% achieved the expected standard compared to 40.2% of pupils who were persistently absent.
- Among pupils with no missed sessions over KS4, 83.7% achieved grades 9 to 4 in English and maths compared to 35.6% of pupils who were persistently absent.

Good attendance promotes good and improved outcomes for children and young people. In BANES we aim to ensure that all staff advocate the child's right to a full-time and efficient education. This is promoted through high quality training and effective partnership working between all frontline services. Details of training from the attendance team can be accessed currently via our newsletters available [here](#)

Context

The Department for Education released guidance (2024) [Working together to improve school attendance](#) to help schools, trusts, governing bodies, and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance and improve consistency of support. This guidance is statutory. The key points: -

1. Clarity of expectation schools, trusts and local authorities have clearly defined statutory roles set out in a clear table of responsibilities
2. Earlier intervention: Schools have legal responsibilities to proactively improve attendance (beyond existing requirements to record accurately) underpinned by timelier sharing of attendance data.
3. Support first: All children and young people and parents no matter where they live in the country will have clear expectations from their school, be informed about their child's attendance and have access to early intervention.
4. Targeted whole family support: Attendance teams in Local Authority's (LAs) work in tandem with early help to provide a whole-family response with a single assessment, plan, and lead practitioner.
5. Independent schools: data will be collected and will receive the same support from LAs.

This strategy focusses on supporting attendance by:

- Preventing patterns of absence from developing by promoting good attendance
- Intervening early by using data to spot patterns of absence before they become persistent and working with families to remove the barriers to attendance.
- Targeting support for persistent and severe absentees with all local partners working together to re-engage children and young people.

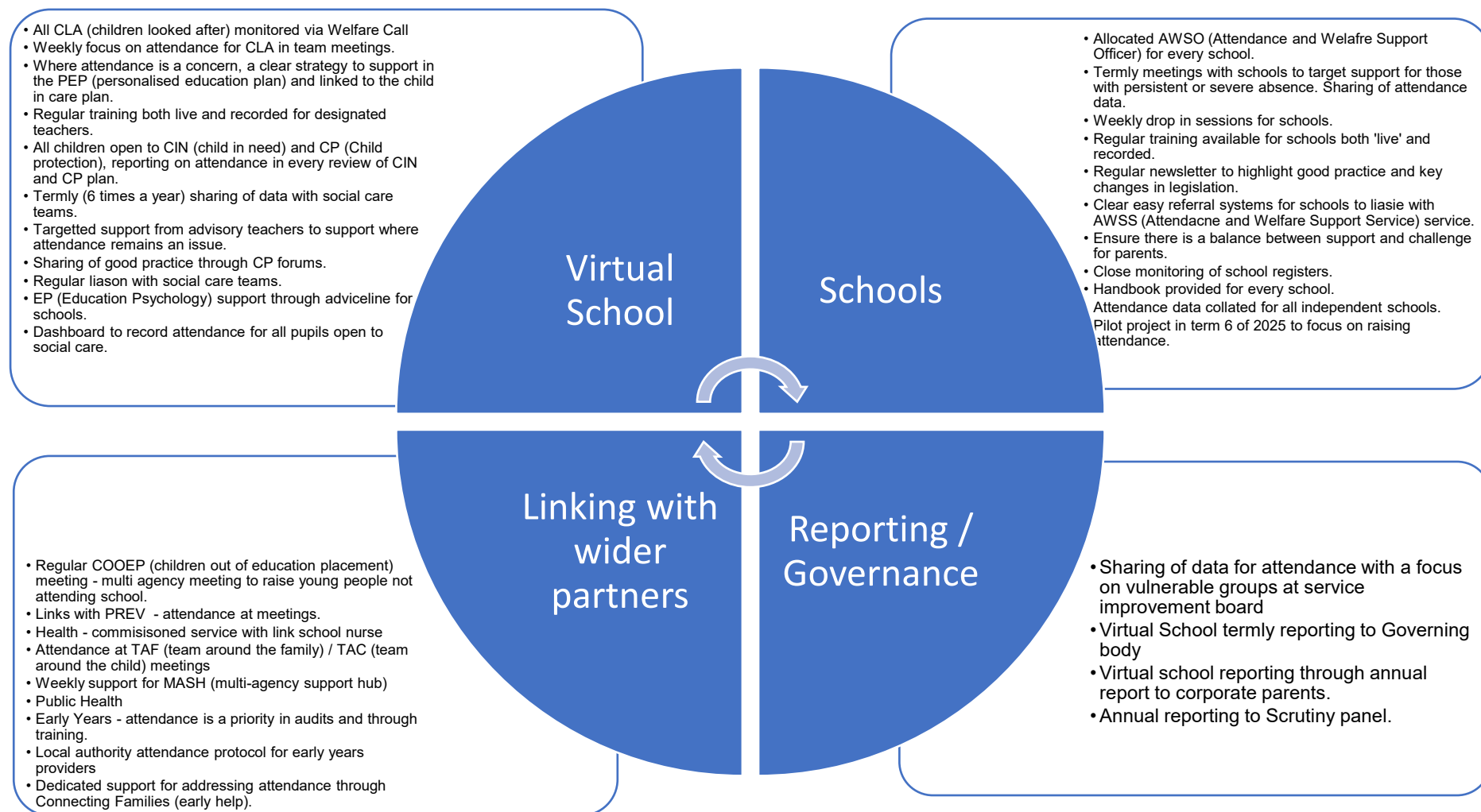
3. Our local picture

In January 2025 there were 38,000 statutory school age pupils. BANES consists of 14 secondary schools, 3 special schools, 64 primary schools and 1 college. 91% of schools are academies with only 7 remaining as local authority maintained. There are 8 independent schools and 8% of the school population attend independent settings which is twice the national average. There are 176 private, voluntary, and independent early years foundation stage providers, 61 school-based early years foundation stage providers, over 100 nurseries, and over 90 childminders. All early year's settings are private, voluntary, or charity-run.

4. What do we do well?

On the next page we have outlined how across the local authority we are ensuring that attendance is everyone's responsibility.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility, and we must work together to achieve the best outcomes for all children and young people



5. What does our data tell us?

The DFE data highlights this good practice as detailed below from the 2023/2024 data:

This is the latest data						
'Absence by geographic level' in Bath and North East Somerset, England and South West between 2022/23 and 2023/24						
	2023/24			2022/23		
	England	South West		England	South West	
		South West	Bath and North East Somerset		South West	Bath and North East Somerset
Authorised absence rate	4.7%	5.3%	5.0%	5.0%	5.4%	5.1%
Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	20.0%	20.8%	18.3%	21.2%	21.3%	18.1%
Percentage of severe absentees (50% or more missed)	2.3%	2.8%	2.3%	2.0%	2.4%	1.9%
Unauthorised absence rate	2.5%	2.3%	1.9%	2.4%	2.2%	1.6%

- This latest data shows that in all key areas we sit below the regional data for the South West.
- Our authorised absence sits slightly higher than national, but in all other areas we sit either below national levels or, for severe absence, in line with national levels.
- Comparison to 2022/2023 shows that whilst our % of persistent absence remains similar, our percentage of severe absence has risen along with a slight rise in unauthorised absence rate.
- Our latest internal data for 2024/2025 suggests that severe absence has dropped to 1.76%, with unauthorised absence also dropping to 1.75%. Our persistent absence has risen slightly to 19.66% but still below national and regional.

Our data does highlight several areas that remain a challenge specifically across the FSM (free school meal) cohort, children with a social worker and ethnic disproportionality as detailed below.

Attendance patterns relating to children open to social care can be accessed [here](#)

This is the latest data							
'LA - Absence' for CINO at 31 March, CLA 12 months at 31 March and CPPO at 31 March in Bath and North East Somerset, England and South West between 2022/23 and 2023/24		Move and reorder table headers					
		England		South West			
		2023/24	2022/23	South West		Bath and North East Somerset	
				2023/24	2022/23	2023/24	2022/23
CINO at 31 March	Authorised absence percentage	9.2%	9.3%	11.1%	11.0%	10.6%	10.4%
	Persistent absentees percentage	47.9%	48.5%	53.5%	52.9%	47.6%	41.4%
	Severe absentees percentage	11.3%	10.2%	14.5%	13.6%	9.2%	c
CLA 12 months at 31 March	Authorised absence percentage	5.4%	5.3%	7.1%	6.5%	6.2%	6.1%
	Persistent absentees percentage	20.8%	20.0%	23.7%	23.5%	18.8%	20.0%
	Severe absentees percentage	5.7%	4.9%	7.0%	6.2%	c	c
CPPO at 31 March	Authorised absence percentage	8.8%	9.0%	11.2%	10.9%	11.0%	11.0%
	Persistent absentees percentage	57.2%	57.5%	60.2%	61.9%	64.1%	60.5%
	Severe absentees percentage	15.6%	14.6%	18.7%	18.8%	15.4%	21.0%

- CIN – our persistent and severe absence sits below both national and regional. Our internal data for 2024/2025 shows a drop in persistent absence, but a rise in severe absence particularly in the secondary cohort.
- CPP – Previously we have reported concerns over the high number of children who are persistently absent from school in this cohort. Our latest internal data shows a significant drop to 43.06% which would place us below both national and regional. Our severe absence still remains below regional and national.

Pupils Eligible for Free School Meals:

'Absence by pupil characteristics' for FSM Not eligible and FSM eligible in Bath and North East Somerset, England and South West between 2022/23 and 2023/24

	FSM Not eligible						FSM eligible					
	2023/24			2022/23			2023/24			2022/23		
	South West		England	South West		England	South West		England	South West		England
	South West	Bath and North East Somerset		South West	Bath and North East Somerset		South West	Bath and North East Somerset		South West	Bath and North East Somerset	
Authorised absence rate	4.7%	4.5%	4.2%	4.8%	4.6%	4.5%	7.6%	7.6%	6.1%	7.6%	7.8%	6.4%
Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	15.1%	13.0%	14.1%	15.9%	13.0%	15.6%	39.3%	39.3%	34.8%	39.8%	39.1%	36.5%
Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	1.5%	1.2%	1.2%	1.3%	0.9%	1.1%	5.9%	5.3%	4.2%	5.0%	5.1%	3.8%

- We still have a significant gap in attendance for our FSM cohort compared to FSM not eligible. This data shows that this gap is not closing. While FSM attendance matches regional and national levels, the gap between FSM and non-FSM students remains larger. Addressing this disparity aligns with ongoing public health efforts to close the attainment gap.

Attendance by Major Ethnicity (further data can be made available but for now this is just as defined by major ethnicity):

'Absence by pupil characteristics' for Ethnicity Major Any Other Ethnic Group, Ethnicity Major Asian Total, Ethnicity Major Black Total, Ethnicity Major Mixed Total, Ethnicity Major Unclassified and 1 other filter in Bath and North East Somerset, England and South West for 2023/24				Move and reorder table headers
		South West		England
		Bath and North East Somerset	South West	
Ethnicity Major Any Other Ethnic Group	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	21.2%	22.1%	19.2%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	0.9%	2.4%	1.8%
Ethnicity Major Asian Total	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	14.8%	16.9%	17.7%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	0.4%	0.9%	1.0%
Ethnicity Major Black Total	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	17.7%	14.3%	12.3%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	2.8%	1.7%	1.3%
Ethnicity Major Mixed Total	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	23.5%	23.8%	21.8%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	3.0%	2.9%	2.4%
Ethnicity Major Unclassified	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	24.7%	26.3%	25.3%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	5.9%	5.2%	4.3%
Ethnicity Major White Total	Percentage of persistent absentees (10% or more missed)	17.8%	20.9%	20.7%
	Percentage of severely absent pupils (50% or more missed)	2.2%	2.8%	2.6%

- This data shows that pupils who are from an ethnicity major mixed are more likely to show persistent absence.
- Pupils who have ethnicity as major black or major mixed are more likely to show severe absence, this data is above the national data.

6. Strategic Objectives for Attendance in Bath and North East Somerset:

- Monitor attendance data, including children missing education, to identify schools or groups needing support, and to aid strategic oversight.
- All children should have effective support and oversight to ensure they can access suitable full-time education, with clear plans in place for those in alternative provision or part-time timetables to transition back to full-time learning.
- Engage proactively and collaboratively with partners to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent from school
- Prioritise attendance in the implementation of significant local authority initiatives, including the Families First programme and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

7. What we need to do to meet our strategic objectives

1. Monitor attendance data, including children missing education, to identify schools or groups needing support, and to aid strategic oversight.

- Embed the use of VYED (View your own education data) into all schools to empower them to be identifying key trends within their own settings.
- Attendance at inclusion panels to review trends within geographic areas.

2. All children should have robust support and oversight to ensure they can access suitable full-time education, with clear plans in place for those in alternative provision or part-time timetables to transition back to full-time learning.

- Robust monitoring and reporting of data from schools regarding pupils who are accessing alternative provision and part-time timetables.
- Liaise with advisory teachers in alternative learning team to ensure effective oversight of attendance for pupils on Section 19 and EOTAS plans.
- Close monitoring of in year refusals to ensure all pupils have an equitable offer of a full-time school place.

3. Engage proactively and collaboratively with partners to reduce the number of students who are persistently absent from school

- Work closely with social care colleagues to reduce the number of children who are absent from school through monthly team meetings and direct support alongside the virtual school for social workers.
- Training available for all B&NES employees about the importance of school attendance and that it is everyone's responsibility.
- Work alongside the public health team in our local area strategy to reduce the attainment gap and increase school attendance.
- Work alongside the race charter schools to set effective practice around supporting and challenging attendance data trends. Share this practice across the local authority.

4. Prioritise attendance in the implementation of significant local authority initiatives, including the Families First programme and the Children's Wellbeing and Schools Bill.

- Continue to actively engage in forming the local authorities plans around implementing the families first programme and the children's well being and schools bill to embed school attendance at the heart of these plans.

