



# **Dorset Council Attendance Strategy and Plan 2022**

**Version 1:0**

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## **Our vision for attendance in Dorset**

Our vision is:

**“We want attendance to be everyone’s business and a key feature of all frontline council services and partners’ work so that the children and young people of Dorset have the highest possible school attendance which enables them to be healthy, happy, safe and achieve the best possible outcomes. We want our children to go on to achieve their potential and to lead fulfilling lives.”**

This vision is within the context of Dorset’s Children’s and Young Peoples plan 2020-25, which sets out that:

- We want Dorset to be the best place to be a child, where communities thrive and where our families are supported to be the best they can be. Our partnership has a bold and courageous vision to deliver the best education for all our children and young people;
- To prepare our young people for independence (adulthood); and
- For our children and young people to experience the best possible health and wellbeing.

## **Our commitment to attendance in Dorset**

Our work is shaped by the following commitments. We will:

- Ensure that attendance is everyone’s business
- Ensure that attendance is a key feature of all frontline council and services and partners’ work
- Work in partnership with young people, parents, schools, health, youth justice service, police and other partners
- Embrace new ways of working to support and enable innovative practice
- Commit to identify and understand barriers to attendance in Dorset
- Commit to provide good quality services
- Commit to early identification and support

## **Why does attendance matter?**

Attending school can be a passport to a child’s future into adulthood, independence and achieving one's ambition.

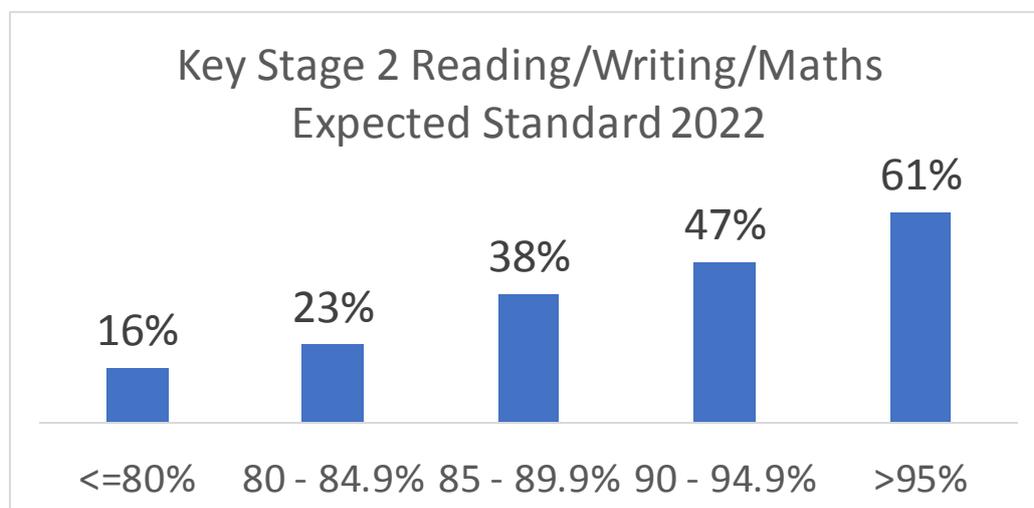
If a child has an attendance level of 90%, they will have missed one day a fortnight in school. Over a school year this will represent four weeks of absence. If this level of absence were maintained for a five-year period it would mean that half a school year would have been missed which can lead to considerable lost learning.

Importantly, attending a school is not just about it being a place to learn, schools are incredible places for children to develop their relationships with friends, take opportunities to try new a different activities and can also be a safe place where children can get the support they need.

For the most vulnerable pupils, regular attendance is an important protective factor and the best opportunity for a child’s learning needs to be identified and support provided. Research has shown associations between regular absence from school and a number of extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent from school) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent from school in at least 1 of the 5 years of study). Other vulnerability factors will have been at play for some of these young people in the study, but attendance at school was highlighted as an area of focus.

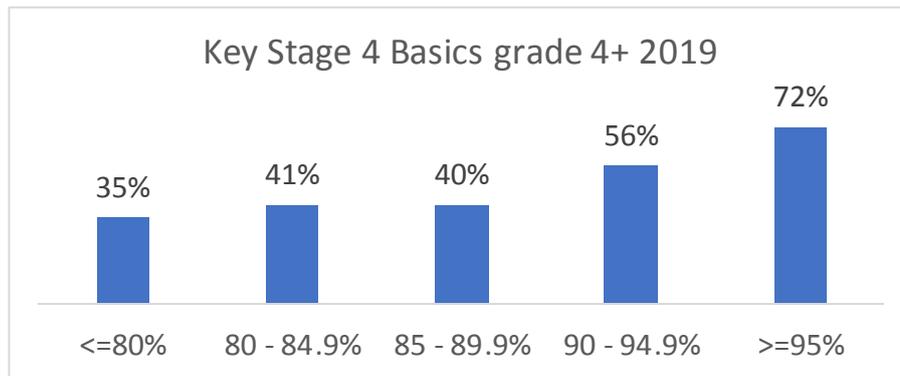
The pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 4 (KS4) have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment. At KS2, pupils not meeting the expected standard in reading, writing and maths had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared to 3.5% among those meeting the expected standard. Moreover, the overall absence rate of pupils not meeting the expected standard was higher than among those meeting the higher standard (4.7% compared to 2.7%). At KS4, pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 in English and maths had an overall absence rate of 8.8%, compared to 5.2% among those achieving grade 4. The overall absence rate of pupils not achieving grade 9 to 4 was over twice as high as those achieving grade 9 to 5 (8.8% compared to 3.7%).

This national data is also reflected in the outcomes achieved by Dorset’s children and young people. In 2022, 61% of children with 95% or above attendance achieved the Key Stage Two expected standard in reading, writing and maths; compared to 47% of children with between 90 and 94.9% attendance; 38% with attendance between 85% - 89.9% attendance, 23% for children with between 80 and 84.9% attendance and 16% for children with below 80% attendance.



At Key Stage 4 in 2019, 72% of children whose attendance was 95% or above achieved a grade four or above in English and Maths, compared to:

- 56% whose attendance was between 90% - 94%;
- 40% for children whose attendance was between 85% - 89.9%;
- 41% for children whose attendance was between 80 and 84.9%; and
- 35% for those children whose attendance was below 80%.

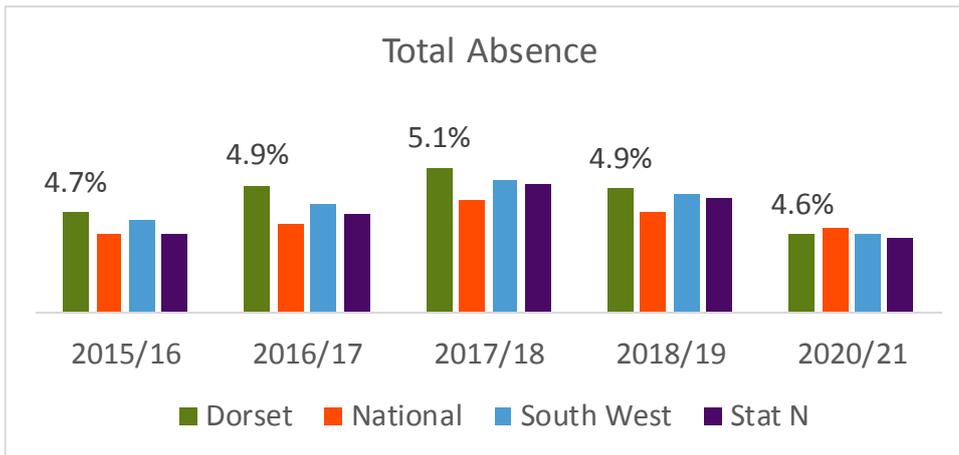


## The national context

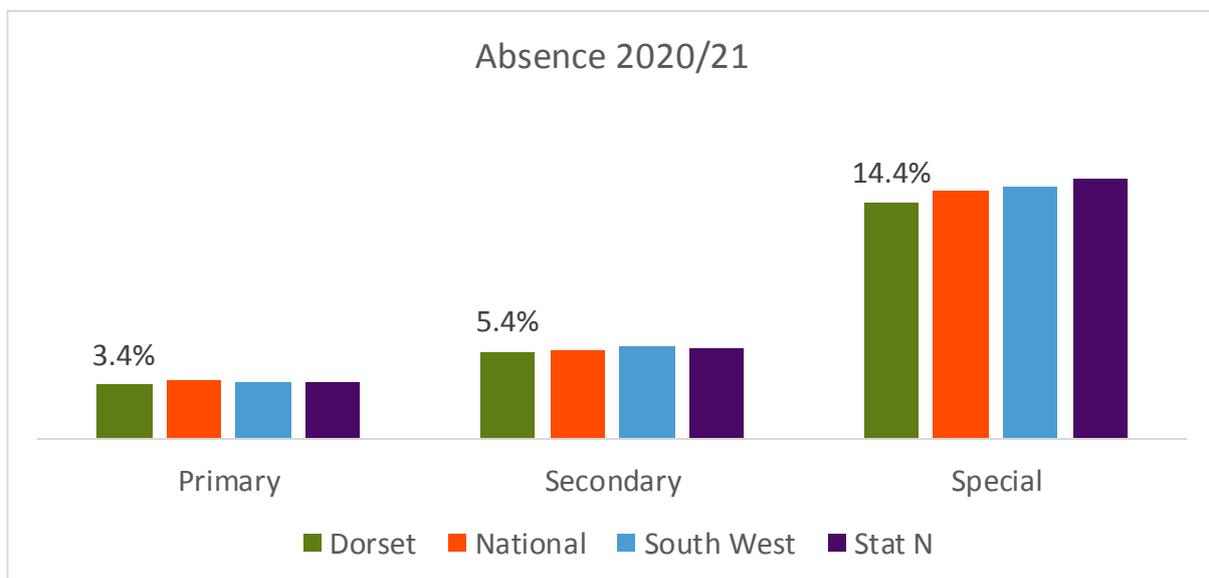
In May 2022, the Department for Education (DfE) published *Working together to improve school attendance* (link: [Working together to improve school attendance](#)). It is guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities to follow which applied from September 2022. The main messages from the guidance are that attendance cannot solely be the preserve of a single member of staff or organisation – **improving attendance is everyone’s business**. Absence from school can often be a symptom of wider issues a family is facing. Local authorities, schools and wider partners need to work together to understand the barriers to attendance and provide support. Legal interventions should be a last resort and should only be used when they are likely to lead to a behavioural change. The guidance sets out expectations on schools, academies and local authorities.

## The Dorset context

Total absence rates improved in Dorset from a high of 5.05% in the academic year of 2017/18, to 4.90% in 2018/19 and 4.57% in 2020/21. In 2020/21 Dorset’s absence rate was in line with the national average (4.62%), South West (4.57%) and statistical neighbour (4.54%) rates.



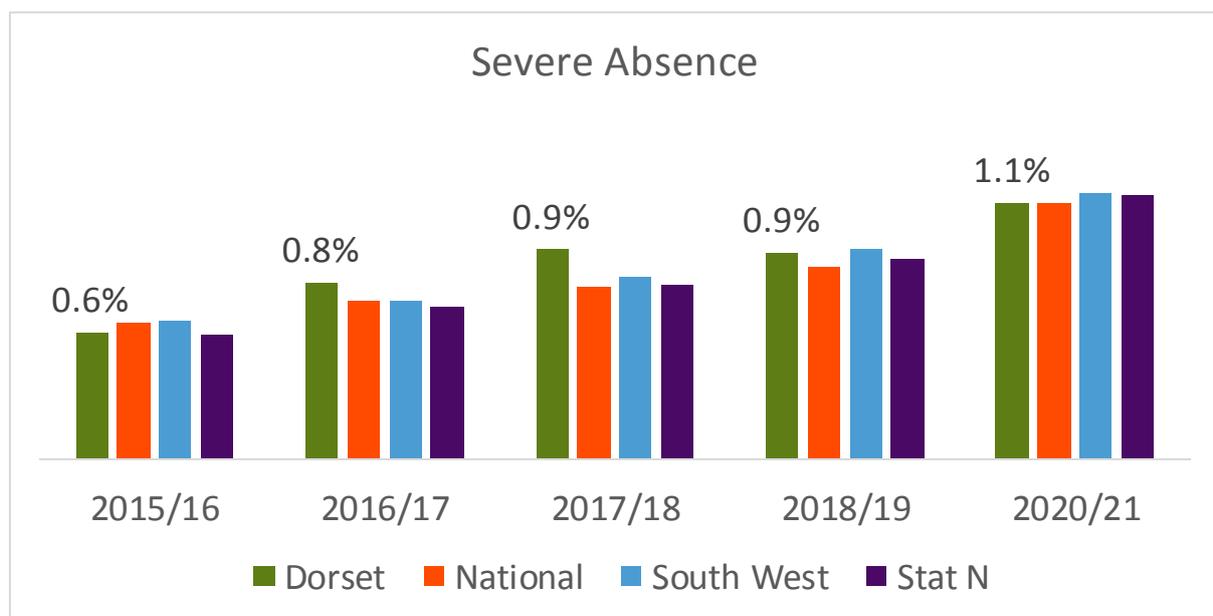
Absence was higher for children and young people in the secondary phase of education (5.4%) compared to the primary phase (3.4%). The absence rate of 3.4% for our primary aged children was below national average (3.6%), the South West (3.5%) and our statistical neighbours (3.5%). Our secondary phase absence rate of 5.4% was also below national average (5.5%), the South West (5.6%) and our statistical neighbours (5.5%). The absence rate of children and young people in our Dorset special schools was higher than their mainstream peers at 14.4%. However, this was below national (15.2%), the South West (15.4%) and our statistical neighbours (15.8%).



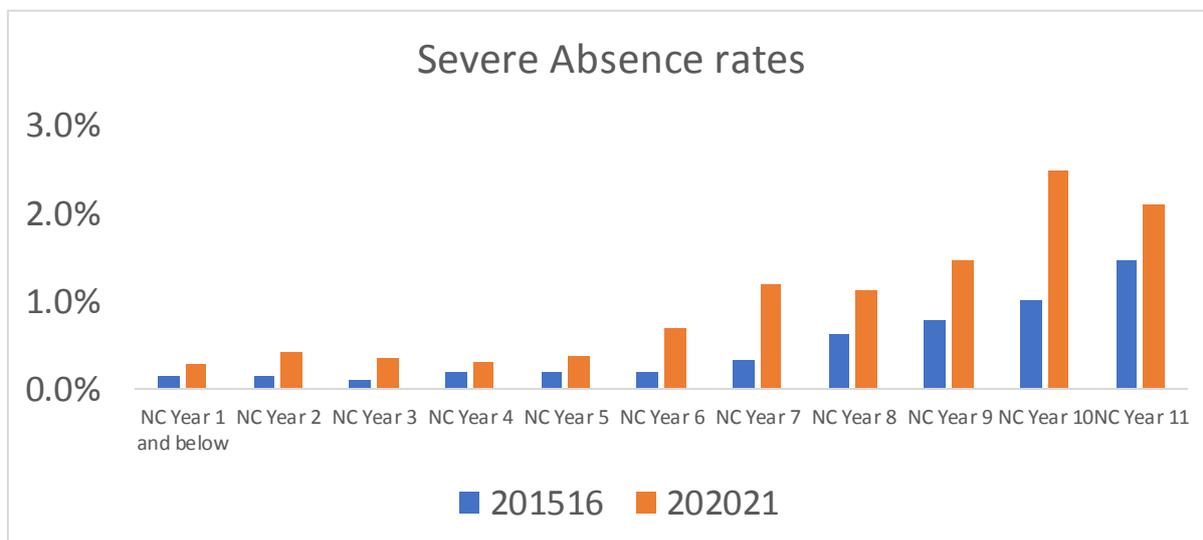
Both nationally and in Dorset, the absence of children and young people entitled to free school meals was higher than those not entitled to free school meals. Both in Dorset and nationally, the absence rate of children and young people entitled to free school meals was 8% compared to 4% for those not entitled. The absence rate of children and young people in Dorset with an Education Health and Care Plan (EHCP) (14%) was broadly in line with national averages (13%) and below national average for children and young people identified as SEN Support (6% in Dorset compared to 7% nationally). The absence rate for

females in Dorset (4%) was below national average (5%) and the absence rate for males (5%) was in line with national average. An area of focus will be children and young people identified as traveller or Irish heritage, whose absence rate was 23% (although this is a small number of children and young people).

There was a rise in persistent absence (where a child or young person is absent for 10% or more of the time), however persistent absence in Dorset was below national, South West and statistical neighbour averages. Children and young people eligible for free school meals tend towards a higher rate of persistent absence, therefore Dorset's attendance plan will have a robust focus on the persistent absence for this group of children and young people. There was also a rise in severe absence, where a child or young person is absent for more than 50% of the time, both in Dorset and nationally following the pandemic. The severe absence rate in Dorset (1.1%) was in line with national average and below that of the South West (1.2%) and statistical neighbours (1.2%). Children and young people eligible for free school meals are more likely to be severely absent and so this will also be a key focus in Dorset's attendance plan.



In the academic year 2020/21, the rate of severe absence was highest in Year 10 (2.5%), followed by Year 11 (2.1%) and Year 9 (1.5%). There was a rise in severe absence rates from Year 6 (0.7%) to Year 7 (1.2%) and so transition will be a key focus in Dorset's attendance plan.

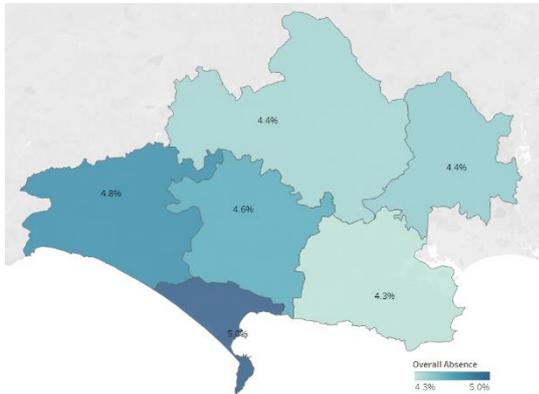


The most recent comparative attendance data we have is from the autumn and spring terms in the 2021/22 academic year. This shows Dorset's absence rate had increased to 8% which was in line with the South West average and slightly above national average (7%). 25% of children and young people were persistently absent from school in Dorset compared to 22% nationally and 25% in the South West. The severe absence rate in Dorset was 1.9% compared to 1.5% nationally and 1.8% in the South West. However, during this period the South West experienced high levels of absence due to covid-19 and also high levels of illness absence. Dorset's covid rate was 1.8% compared to 1.3% nationally and there was a higher illness rate in Dorset of 5.5% compared to 4.7% nationally.

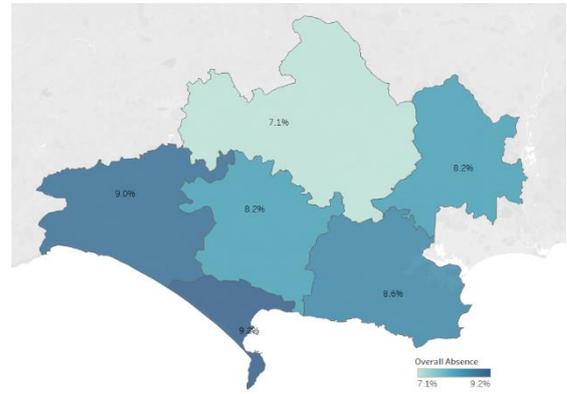
### The Localities context

In the 2020/21 academic year, the lowest rates of absence was in the Purbeck (4.3%), East (4.4%) and North localities (4.4%) and the highest rates of absence was in the Chesil locality (5.0%). In the autumn and spring terms of the academic year 2021/22, the highest rate of absence was in the Chesil (9.2%) and West localities (9.0%) and the lowest rate was in the North locality (7.1%). There will be focus in the Dorset attendance plan on increasing the attendance of our children and young people in the Chesil and West localities and exploring learning from the North locality which could be shared with other areas in Dorset.

Academic year 2020/21:



Autumn and spring terms 2021/22:



## The Dorset Approach

We held a multi-agency Dorset attendance workshop which was attended by over 80 colleagues and partners from Dorset Council, our schools, police, youth justice, parents and carers and health.

The following were identified as strengths in schools:

- Relationships
- Community links
- Care
- Values
- Clear policy and processes
- Communication
- Curriculum
- Creativity
- Tracking



The strengths identified in localities were:

- Whole family working
- Communication

- Specific support
- Relational practice
- Parental support
- Contextual safeguarding
- Data rich

The strengths identified in communities were:

- Young people
- Family and neighbours
- Volunteer groups
- Health

The workshop identified Dorset wide priorities and each locality developed their own priorities based on locality needs. This information has been used to write Dorset's attendance plan and strategy.

The team leading inclusion have also delivered training to education and early help staff as well as social care teams. We have completed a dip sample of educational outcomes for children identified as Children in Need (CiN) or supported through a Child Protection (CP) plan which will be used to inform further professional development so that all CiN and CP plans have attendance targets where a child's attendance is below 96%.

In addition, we are using Orchestra (a management information software) to collect live attendance data from school's information systems which feeds an inclusion dashboard allowing practitioners and leaders to prioritise their work based on live trends of data coming directly from schools.

## **Dorset wide attendance priorities**

1. Consistent Dorset wide policy and practice
2. Knowledge sharing and communication
3. Early identification of causes lead to development of targeted interventions
4. Consistent approach to transition
5. Transport solutions



## Dorset's localities' attendance priorities

<p><b>North locality</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Attendance of year groups whose transition between phases of education was disrupted by the pandemic</li> <li>2. Improve the effectiveness of inclusion panels through training and in school communication</li> <li>3. Improve communication with our parents and health colleagues</li> </ol>	<p><b>Chesil</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Improve communication between secondary and primary schools through a commitment to restorative and strengths-based practice</li> <li>2. Decrease rates of severe absence by clearly identifying individual barriers to attendance and ensuring the voices of our children, young people and families are heard</li> <li>3. Decrease the absence rates of our children and young people eligible for free school meals and investigate how local organisations can support with this</li> </ol>
<p><b>Dorchester</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ensure improvements to attendance are acknowledged</li> <li>2. Locality and disadvantaged schools funding to be used to support attendance</li> <li>3. The Dorchester Area School Pyramid (DASP) attendance panel to focus on using parenting contracts to support children and young people with high level attendance issues</li> <li>4. Collaborate with the Local Alliance Group (LAG) regarding pupils who are persistently absent</li> <li>5. Explore the possibility of Dorchester Learning Centre supporting with pupils who are severely absent</li> </ol>	<p><b>West</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Build resilience through a focus on student voice and parental confidence</li> <li>2. Develop early help for parents in the West Locality</li> <li>3. Improve the attendance of children and young people with SEN</li> <li>4. Develop alternative provision (AP) for short interventions</li> </ol>
<p><b>East and Purbeck</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Raise the focus on attendance in the East and Purbeck Local Alliance Groups (LAG)</li> <li>2. Widen access to the Local Inclusion Partnership (LIP) meetings to include first and middle schools</li> <li>3. Ensure there is a child centered focus/approach in the East and Purbeck Localities</li> <li>4. Improve parental engagement in the East and Purbeck Localities</li> </ol>	

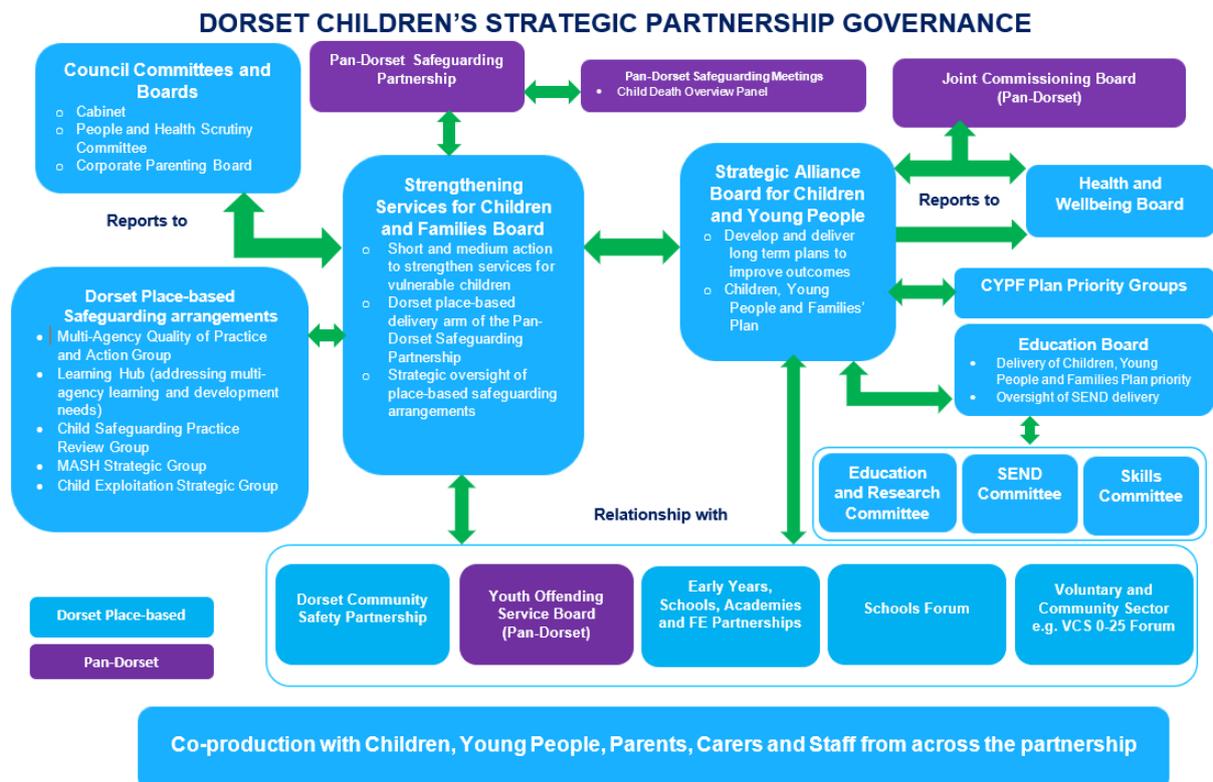
## How we will make sure this is delivered

The progress of this strategy will be reviewed at the Dorset Education Board. A termly report detailing evidence and impact of action points will be presented for each of the priority areas. This information will be presented by the Service Manager for Inclusion.

The Strengthening Services Board will monitor the development and embedding of attendance targets in CiN and CP Plans, ensuring attendance becomes a key feature of all frontline council services and partners work and the delivery of three tiers of attendance training across all directorates.

Attendance data will be incorporated into the inclusion dashboard. There will be a focus on vulnerable groups, such as children and young people with a social worker and children and young people with an EHCP. Children’s Services Leadership Team will receive weekly updates on Dorset’s attendance.

We will continue to work with our partners and families. Attendees of the Dorset attendance workshop would like it to become an annual event. We will meet termly with senior leaders championing attendance in schools and regularly update Head Teachers at briefings and meetings. We will work with Dorset Parent-Carer Council to organise an event for our families and will also collaborate with the children and young people of Dorset.



# Dorset Attendance Plan

## Dorset Wide Priorities

### Priority One: Consistent Dorset wide policy and practice

#### Vision:

We will ensure that Dorset attendance policies and practices are followed and consistently applied by Dorset Council colleagues, schools, trusts and partners across all six localities. Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on a consistent approach to behaviour.

#### Outcomes:

- The Dorset attendance guidance is understood by Dorset Council colleagues, schools, trusts and other partners
- There is a commitment by all schools and trusts to follow Dorset's attendance policy and practice
- A consistent approach is taken to inclusion panels across Dorset's localities, schools and trusts
- An increase in the use of parental contacts to support improvements in attendance across Dorset
- Whilst recognising that legal intervention is a very last resort, Dorset council, schools and trusts make use of the full range of legal interventions rather than relying solely on fixed penalty notices
- Attendance will feature in all children in need (CIN) and child protection(CP) plans
- Dorset's absence rates will be below national, South West and statistical neighbour rates for total absence, severe absence and persistent absence
- The persistent absence rate of our children eligible for free school meals will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children and young people with a traveller of Irish heritage will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children with an EHCP will reduce to below the national average
- A reduction in the number of children on part-time tables and the length of time that pupils are on a part-time timetable
- Children and young people with health needs will be able to access education swiftly

<b>Priority Number</b>	<b>Action</b>
P1/001	Publish and circulate up-dated Dorset attendance guidance so that Dorset council colleagues, schools and other partners have clear processes to follow.
P1/002	Establish termly locality networks for senior leaders in schools with responsibility for championing attendance in their settings. This will provide regular opportunities to embed and clarify policy and practice and to resolve any issues that may arise.
P1/003	Develop a Dorset Inclusion Toolkit to ensure that attendance processes are clear and easily accessible and provide guidance on the use of part-time timetables. The Dorset Inclusion Toolkit will also provide schools with useful information and resources on all areas of inclusion.
P1/004	Multi-academy trusts check attendance policy and practices are being implemented consistently across their schools.
P1/005	Provide CPD to Inclusion Team Managers and Inclusion Leads to ensure that the Dorset attendance strategy, plan, policy and practices are understood and applied consistently.
P1/006	Provide Inclusion Team Managers and Inclusion Leads with regular opportunities to clarify processes and practices and to resolve any issues that may arise through Inclusion Development meetings, Inclusion Practice meetings and inclusion 'drop-in' meetings.
P1/007	Ensure that independent schools and alternative provision settings registered as schools follow the Dorset attendance policy and processes. Ensure that independent schools and alternative provision settings registered as schools have termly inclusion meetings.
P1/008	Utilise the information and analysis gathered from 'dip-sampling' child in need (CiN) and Child Protection Plans (CPP) to develop and deliver further attendance CPD to social care colleagues.
P1/009	Promote and embed 'Therapeutic Thinking' across our Dorset Schools as part of ensuring schools are calm, orderly, safe and supportive environments where all of our children and young people want to attend.
P1/010	Audit and review the new locality medical panels to ensure that they are efficient and effective in ensuring children with health needs are able to access the right provision for them.
P1/011	Deliver CPD to Inclusion Team Managers, SEN Team Managers and Education and Early Help Service Managers on medical/health referrals to ensure children and young people with health needs access the right provision for them.
P1/012	Development plans across Dorset Council (not just children's services) will include actions around school attendance (for example transport and housing).
P1/013	Ensure all children and young people who are severely absent have a robust plan in place to improve attendance.

## Priority Two: Knowledge sharing and communication

### Vision:

Improving attendance will be everyone's business. Children, young people, families, communities and professionals will understand the importance of attendance to children's well-being and outcomes. We will listen to the voices of our children, young people and families and take a restorative strength-based approach to communication. There will be a commitment to building strong relationships with children, young people and families and between professionals which will enable us to provide the best support possible. We will also use communication to raise the aspirations of children and young people by introducing them to new people, opportunities and experiences. We will ensure that strategic, operational and individual knowledge about children and young people is shared and communicated clearly where appropriate.

### Outcomes:

- Dorset Council shares strategic level information with schools, trusts and wider partners
- Professionals share knowledge and information in relation to individual children and young people where appropriate
- Where there is multi-disciplinary support for families, in line with early help principles, families should receive a single assessment, plan, and where necessary, a single lead practitioner
- Our children and young people are introduced to new people, experiences and opportunities which raises career aspirations
- Dorset's absence rates will be below national, South West and statistical neighbour rates for total absence, severe absence and persistent absence
- The persistent absence rate of our children eligible for free school meals will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children and young people with a traveller of Irish heritage will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children with an EHCP will reduce to below the national rate

Priority Number	Action
P2/001	Establish an annual Dorset attendance conference involving Dorset Council colleagues from education, early help and social care; schools, health, Youth Justice Service (YJS), police and other partners.

P2/002	Work collaboratively with children, young people and their families to further develop Dorset's attendance strategy, plan, policy and practice through specific workshops.
P2/003	Establish a multi-agency Dorset attendance task force to ensure that attendance is everyone's business.
P2/004	Regularly include attendance updates in Dorset's education bulletin.
P2/005	Establish avenues for regularly sharing knowledge regarding attendance with our wider partners such as health and the police.
P2/006	Utilise the termly locality networks for senior leaders in schools with responsibility for championing attendance in their settings to share good practice.
P2/007	Ensure inclusion teams are utilising the inclusion dashboard to inform discussions with schools, trusts and wider partners.
P2/008	Establish a three-tiered attendance training programme across Dorset Council to ensure that everyone understands and promotes the importance of good attendance: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Universal (for all frontline staff)</li> <li>2. Enhanced (for staff whose role is more closely linked to attendance)</li> <li>3. Specific (for those staff whose role specifically includes attendance).</li> </ol>
P2/009	Include case studies of good attendance related practice in the Dorset Inclusion Toolkit.
P2/010	Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation and effective practices for improvement will involve close interaction with schools' efforts on curriculum, therefore we will develop avenues to share best practice in relation to curriculum models.
P2/011	Develop opportunities for our children and young people to meet new people and have new experiences that raise their career aspirations.
P2/012	Ensure joint-planning meetings between specialist teachers, educational psychologists and schools are used effectively.
P2/013	Deliver training to designated teachers on their role in promoting the attendance of our children and young people with a social worker or have ever had a social worker.
P2/014	Improve our data processes so that we understand the attendance of our children and young people that have ever had a social worker.
P2/015	Ensure that 100% of our schools are able to provide attendance data through 'Orchestra'.
P2/016	Deliver an attendance campaign across Dorset utilising social media and other methods of communication

## **Priority Three: Early identification of cause leads to development of targeted interventions**

### **Vision:**

We will ensure that across Dorset there is a commitment to remove any barriers to attendance by building strong and trusting relationships and working together to put the right support in place. There will be a commitment to identifying our children and young people at risk of poor attendance early and to understanding the individual needs and barriers for our families so that evidence based targeted interventions can be put in place to reduce absence before it becomes habitual. We will work to support our parents from the birth of their child where appropriate.

Our children with social, emotional and mental health (SEMH) needs and our children with Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) will be able to access the right support at the right time so that they are able to achieve their best possible outcomes. Other special education needs, such as speech and language and neurodiversity will be identified early, understood by schools and other professionals and effective support put in place to meet their needs.

### **Outcomes:**

- Our children and young people at risk of poor attendance are identified early
- There is improved identification of our children and young people who are young carers
- Schools and other professionals understand the individual barriers to attendance for our children, young people and families
- Schools and wider professionals develop and implement targeted interventions that address the individual barriers to attendance of our children, young people and families
- Our parents requiring support from the birth of their child are identified and appropriate support put in place
- There will be a timely multi-agency response where appropriate when children and young people at risk of poor attendance are identified, such as team around the family meetings
- Dorset council colleagues, schools, trusts and wider partners take a restorative strength-based approach to working with our children, young people and families as well as each other
- Dorset's absence rates will be below national, South West and statistical neighbour rates for total absence, severe absence and persistent absence.
- The persistent absence rate of our children eligible for free school meals will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children and young people with a traveller of Irish heritage will reduce to below the national average

- The absence rate for our children with an EHCP will reduce to below the national rate

<b>Priority Number</b>	<b>Action</b>
P3/001	Establish community champions and mentors to support children, young people and families to remove barriers to attendance.
P3/002	Schools to include attendance in their pupil premium strategies in order to better understand barriers to attendance faced by their children eligible for free school meals and provide targeted intervention.
P3/003	Schools to include attendance in their SEND strategies in order to better understand barriers to attendance faced by children and young people with an Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) and SEND support and provide targeted intervention.
P3/004	Continue to develop specific support for children with Irish traveller heritage and promote awareness of their needs and culture through work with Dorset Youth Association and Kushti Bok.
P3/005	Embed the 'Balance System' to identify speech, language and communication needs early and ensure robust intervention is in place.
P3/006	Deliver the autism in schools project, focusing on schools with a high number of suspensions. In the first year we will work with six secondary/upper schools (one in each locality) and one larger feeder schools. The aim being to reduce the suspensions and exclusions of children and young people with autism and neurodiversity.
P3/007	Promote understanding of SEMH needs and EBSA needs at locality networks for senior school leaders with responsibility for attendance.
P3/008	Develop and deliver EBSA avoidance CPD to schools and wider partners.
P3/009	Collaborative work between health and education colleagues to develop SEMH support to remove barriers to attendance leading to a reduction in absence rates for children with SEMH needs.
P3/010	Work in partnership with NHS Dorset to roll out Mental Health Support Teams in all Schools across Dorset to meet the needs of children and young people presenting with mild to moderate mental health needs.
P3/011	Develop parent support packages which start from birth so that families requiring support are identified and receive support as early as possible.
P3/012	Work with health colleagues to explore avenues to more effective communication with parents around health concerns following the covid-19 pandemic.
P3/013	Develop Inclusion Hubs in mainstream schools, which are specific resourced provision (SRP) to meets the needs of our children and young people with SEMH and communication and interaction needs.

	We have the capital funding to deliver the first phase of inclusion hubs which would increase the number of SRPs in Dorset by seven.
P3/014	Review the alternative provision (AP) offer in Dorset so that children and young people who may need access to this type of setting for a short-period of time have their needs met and achieve positive outcomes.
P3/015	Work with 'My Time' to improve identification of our young carers in Dorset and the support they receive.
P3/016	Promote the use of AV1 so that children and young people who are unable to physically attend their school for a temporary period can be virtually present in their classrooms.

#### Priority Four: Consistent approach to transition

##### Vision:

We will ensure that transitions between phases of education and changes in educational settings across all ages are strength-based, smooth and supportive. All trusts and schools will provide a warm welcome to all children, young people and their families building strong and trusting relationships with them so that they have a sense of belonging.

There will be a robust focus on children and young people who may be at risk of poor attendance, such as children with a social worker and young carers. We will ensure that the school where children and young people are transitioning to have a good understanding of any special educational needs children and young people may have.

##### Outcomes:

- Reduction in the use of reduced timetables in Year Seven
- Reduction in the Year Seven severe absence rate
- Dorset's absence rates will be below national, South West and statistical neighbour rates for total absence, severe absence and persistent absence.
- The persistent absence rate of our children eligible for free school meals will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children and young people with a traveller of Irish heritage will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children with an EHCP will reduce to below the national rate

Priority Number	Action
P4/001	Schools ensure robust and enhanced transition plans are in place for children and young people likely to have poor attendance and for other vulnerable children and young people, such as those with SEN or a social worker.
P4/002	Deliver strength-based and restorative practice training to schools to ensure that this approach is taken to transition.

P4/003	Use the locality network meetings for senior leaders championing attendance in schools to focus on transition at certain points in the academic year.
P4/004	Ensure schools that children and young people with a social worker are transitioning to are invited to meetings before they go on roll and that transition between schools is included in CiN and CP plans.
P4/005	Promote and implement Dorset's transition guidance (to include the delivery of training) to support our vulnerable children and young people.

### Priority Five: Transport solutions

**Vision:** Transport issues will not prevent children and young people from attending school.

#### Outcomes:

- Transport is not a barrier to school attendance for any child or young person in Dorset
- Social Workers and Early Help professionals are able to advise families around school choice and its transport implications
- Dorset's absence rates will be below national, South West and statistical neighbour rates for total absence, severe absence and persistent absence.
- The persistent absence rate of our children eligible for free school meals will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children and young people with a traveller of Irish heritage will reduce to below the national average
- The absence rate for our children with an EHCP will reduce to below the national rate

Priority Number	Action
P5/001	To ensure that families who are entitled to free transport are accessing it
P5/002	Develop good home to school transport initiatives to support children and young people at risk of poor attendance
P5/003	Develop CPD for social workers and early help professionals so they are able to advise families around school choice and its transport implications
P5/004	Ensure robust processes are in place for the allocation of transport for children and young people who are permanently excluded or on managed moves
P5/006	Dorset Council education colleagues to explore with Dorset travel options to improve school transport