

# Contents

<b>Unit 9.1S</b>	<b>Developing and managing effective data collection systems</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Unit 9.2S</b>	<b>Developing systems to celebrate regular attendance and punctuality throughout the day</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>Unit 9.3S</b>	<b>Systems and structures to support the subject teacher in promoting good attendance</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>Unit 9.4S</b>	<b>Developing organisational structures that promote regular attendance and punctuality</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>Unit 9.5S</b>	<b>Managing internal truancy</b>	<b>45</b>
<b>Unit 9.6S</b>	<b>Supporting pupils to catch up with coursework</b>	<b>55</b>
<b>Unit 9.7S</b>	<b>Developing good starters and plenaries to encourage regular attendance and punctuality</b>	<b>63</b>
<b>Unit 9.8S</b>	<b>Developing relationships with pupils who are regular non-attenders</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Unit 9.9S</b>	<b>Supporting vulnerable pupils and those who are reluctant to attend</b>	<b>81</b>



9 Attendance Unit: 9.1S	
<b>Title</b>	Developing and managing effective data collection systems
<b>Level</b>	Getting started
<b>Audience</b>	Staff
<b>Purpose</b>	To support schools in making the most of attendance data to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raise the profile of attendance with the whole-school community</li> <li>identify trends and emerging attendance problems to inform actions</li> <li>explicitly make the link between attainment and attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	This task can be used with several audiences to promote discussion or be used as a self-study exercise. For example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the behaviour and attendance leader works with the curriculum and attendance managers, while the Education Welfare Officer acts as an adviser and supports developments</li> <li>a group of staff select a few sections from the table, discuss perceptions of data and then match these to the real data to inform the first steps of planning.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the fact that all staff have access to attendance data for their pupils and for comparator groups and use it to promote regular and improved attendance;</li> <li>inclusion of attendance data in departmental/year team action plans;</li> <li>improvement in attendance and punctuality at school and in lessons.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Bullying Classroom behaviour Curriculum
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	Pupils: Getting started 9.1P Using data with pupils to encourage regular attendance and punctuality Parents/carers: Getting started 9.1PC Using data with parents/carers to encourage regular attendance and punctuality
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Tackling Truancy Together</i> (DfEE 0084/2001) This document contains case studies showing a range of initiatives carried out by School Attendance Services across the country</p> <p><i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack (ISBN 1860251765) and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack (ISBN 1873562942) (Both published by The Chalkface Project) Suggestions for activities and worksheets to motivate those at risk of truancy</p> <p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance</a> DfES improving attendance website – provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on school attendance</p> <p><a href="http://www.chalkface.com">www.chalkface.com</a> The Chalkface Project</p>

# Developing and managing effective data collection systems

## Introduction

Many of the structures to support good attendance are dependent on the effective use of data. Analysis of attendance data requires speed and thoroughness because the outcomes of the analysis are the triggers for follow-up actions. There are several layers of data that when scrutinised for trends can offer an insight into the underlying cause of absenteeism.

The following case study reveals an outline of how one school tackled poor attendance rates by improving the collection, analysis and use of attendance data, and also through a number of other linked actions:

## Case study

### School profile:

Age range: 11–16  
No. of pupils: 1104  
FSM: 36%

### The situation in 1998–99:

Level of unauthorised absence: 4.1%  
Level of authorised absence: 8.3%

### Outcome in 2000-01:

Level of unauthorised absence: 2.2%  
Level of authorised absence: 5.8%

### Actions

Attendance was targeted because of growing concerns about the pupils' low attendance rate and the general feeling that attendance was not high profile. First actions included:

- recruiting an attendance officer to support the introduction of:
  - first-day call system;
  - an analysis of data to highlight trends with regard to gender, cohort and am/pm attendance rates in order to provide regular updates/feedback to staff and pupils on targets and current performance;
- the introduction of a new attendance rewards system following negotiations with the pupil council.

### Next steps

- To improve the support offered to parents/carers by:
  - introducing a termly workshop for parents where 'supporting attendance' will be a regular feature;
  - using the parents' association as a forum for developing ideas and spreading key messages.
- To raise parent/carer awareness of the relationship between attendance and attainment by, for example, including a reference to attendance on achievement certificates.



## Activity 1

It may be useful to discuss the case study with a focus on the following questions.

- What might the specific role of the attendance officer have been in this case?
- How could we use an attendance officer in our school?
- How might we use the pupil council or other pupil representative group to negotiate an attendance rewards system?
- What might be the process involved in establishing termly parent/carer workshops? Who would be responsible for this in our school? How might the 'supporting attendance' feature be presented?

### Attendance policy and registration

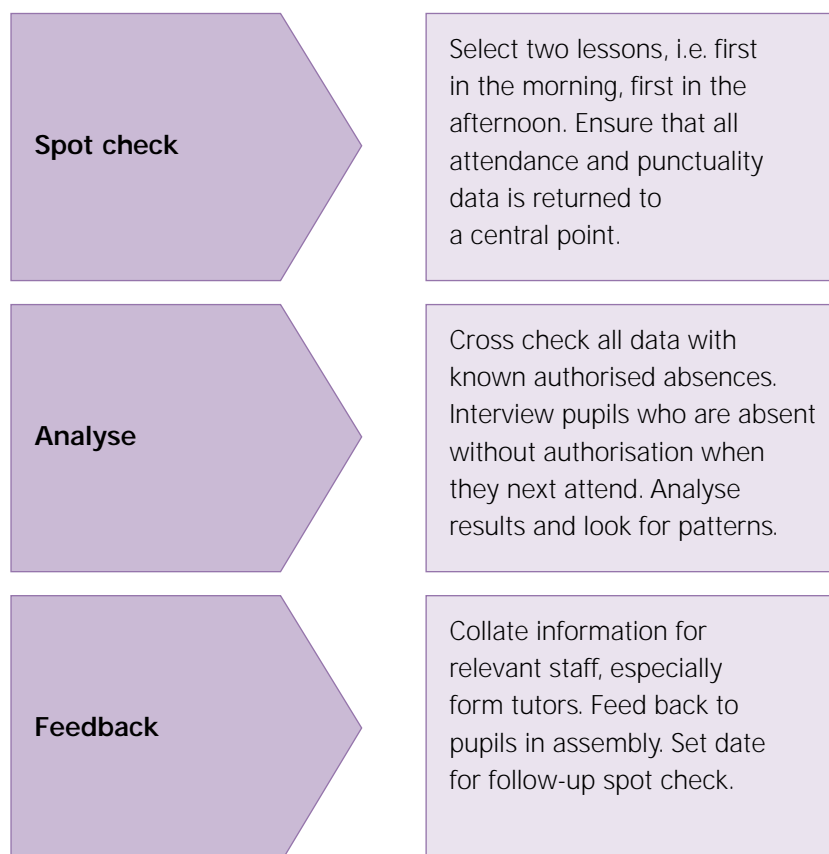
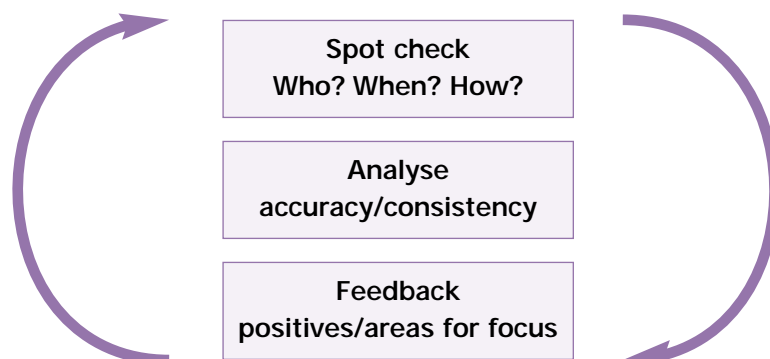
An effective school policy on attendance is a key factor in achieving attendance improvement. Please refer to attendance policy guidance (*Advice on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy*, DfES 0628-2003).

Effective policy implementation requires effective monitoring. One of the key tools in effective monitoring is the effective use of registration data. The DfES school attendance website contains some examples of local guidance on registration systems.

Whether the school has a paper or electronic registration system, it is critical that there is:

- consistency;
- accuracy;
- maximum use made of the data, supported by an agreed understanding that attendance data is an important and effective resource for informing actions.

Many schools opt for regular spot checks on the registration system with supportive feedback for staff. They find this strategy maintains the high profile of attendance and clarifies staff responsibilities. The diagram below summarises the process.





## Activity 2

### Using data to promote regular attendance

This activity can be used by different staff groups to promote discussion or as a self-study exercise. The key is to establish:

- spot check – what data is collected? By who? When? How?
- analysis – how accurate/consistent is the data we collect?
- feedback – how can the data inform the process of working to improve attendance? What actions are required? What other types of data would be useful and why?

If further action is necessary, then this needs to be recorded and written into a manageable action plan. If several areas are highlighted as being in need of action, then they will need to be prioritised. Aim to identify one key action that will have the most impact on attendance rates and carry it out systematically, rather than attempt a scatter of actions.

Consider **Resource sheet 1** which outlines the range of attendance data a school might collect, how it can be used to detect trends and patterns, and possible actions to take as a result.

By comparing with your school, use the table to:

- reflect on your current data and whether there are additional aspects of attendance that you need data on;
- identify any specific trends or patterns you already know of (making use of the audit you have already carried out);
- discuss with colleagues what specific actions you might take, using those supplied in the table as a starting point, but not being restricted by them.

## Summary

By the end of this unit staff will:

- better understand how to make use of attendance data to improve attendance and punctuality;
- have raised awareness of how to respond to identified trends in attendance;
- have explored the link between attendance and attainment for pupils in the school.





## Resource sheet 1

### Using data to promote regular attendance

Data type	Trends/patterns	Actions
Overall school attendance %	<p>Is the attendance rate on a par with national/local performance?</p> <p>Comparing the last three years, is the overall rate of attendance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increasing;</li> <li>stuck;</li> <li>on a decline?</li> </ul>	<p>Raise profile of attendance. For example, use assemblies, pupil/staff noticeboards, flyers to parents/carers, rewards, etc.</p> <p>Give clear messages about the responsibility of the whole-school community. For example, put attendance on the agenda for key meetings and use these opportunities to discuss and agree roles and responsibilities.</p> <p>Data need to be scrutinised at a deeper level to ensure that the attendance rate is not masking an underlying problem.</p>
Gender and ethnic groups	<p>Do girls attend more than boys?</p> <p>Is there a difference in the attendance rates of different ethnic groups?</p> <p>Does the school data match LEA trends?</p>	<p>Find out possible reasons for differences via pupil questionnaires and/or discussion groups and respond accordingly to address any imbalance.</p> <p>Consult with the EWS. Find out whether this difference is a school/local/national trend.</p> <p>Raise profile of parent/carer-school partnership by maximising opportunities to inform parents/carers and ensuring that their contributions are acknowledged and respected.</p> <p>Set up attendance competitions, for example, girls against boys, to respond to data analysis outcomes. Ensure that regular updates are announced/displayed.</p>
Cohort comparisons	<p>Is there one particular cohort with an attendance rate significantly higher/lower than other years? What was their attendance like last year and the year before last? Were habits established before entry to the school?</p> <p>Is there a particular year where attendance slumps, for example, Year 9 attendance always drops below 90%?</p>	<p>Ensure attendance matches other transfer issues in terms of profile. Use assemblies, parents'/carers' evenings, from tutor time to raise profile of attendance.</p> <p>Set up an attendance competitions between cohorts. Regularly display updates.</p> <p>Find out which pupils within a cohort need extra support via personal targets, mentoring, ESO.</p>

# Resource sheet 1 page 2 of 3

Data type	Trends/patterns	Actions
Comparing form groups	<p>How significant is the variation in attendance figures for different form groups:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• within one cohort;</li> <li>• compared to all years?</li> </ul> <p>When two groups from different ends of the attendance spectrum are compared, are there differences in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• attitudes to attendance;</li> <li>• the relationship between pupils and form tutor;</li> <li>• the quality of the registers;</li> <li>• the importance the form tutor places on attendance for learning?</li> </ul>	<p>Find reasons why two groups in the same cohort have a significant variation in attendance. For example, use pupil focus groups to explore the issues.</p> <p>Take appropriate actions. For example, map out a support plan for a form tutor who needs to develop form tutor skills.</p> <p>Set individual pupil targets and accumulate to an aggregate target for each form group to be used in a competitive context (this prevents one form group always losing because of, say, two non-attenders). Ensure regular updates via assemblies, noticeboards, etc.</p> <p>Raise the profile of the form tutor's responsibility. For example, all form tutors attend an induction programme and are then allocated one lesson per week where they can work on a one-to-one or small-group basis with pupils from the form. Maximise opportunities for relationship building. (See <i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2, session 2.</i>)</p> <p>Share effective form tutor practice.</p>
Curriculum comparisons	<p>Do pupils attend some subjects more than others?</p> <p>Which subjects have high/low attendance figures?</p> <p>Does attendance vary within a subject?</p> <p>Is this same trend occurring in other schools in the LEA?</p>	<p>Find reasons for variations in attendance. Track pupils to experience their curriculum diet. For example, is mathematics always the last lesson of the day, so by Thursday pupils decide not to attend?</p> <p>Are there issues with the quality of teaching that need to be supported?</p> <p>Why do our LIG partners not have the same trends? What are they doing differently?</p>

Data type	Trends/patterns	Actions
Individual pupil data	<p>How many pupils are in the 85–90% category? How many are in the 90–95% category?</p> <p>Who are these pupils? What is their profile in terms of year, ability, ethnicity, gender?</p> <p>Is there a correlation between attendance and attainment?</p>	<p>Work in partnership with parents/carers. Utilise parents' evenings, letters and phone calls to parents/carers.</p> <p>Target support on one category, e.g. 87–90%.</p> <p>Set individual targets and include regular monitoring. Offer support via mentors. Keep all staff informed of the key focus.</p> <p>Celebrate successes.</p>



9 Attendance Unit: 9.2S	
<b>Title</b>	Developing systems to celebrate regular attendance and punctuality throughout the day
<b>Level</b>	Developing good practice
<b>Audience</b>	Staff, including administrative staff
<b>Purpose</b>	To support the school in reflecting on current practice in relation to celebrating good attendance and punctuality. This resource supports school managers in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• reflecting on existing good practice</li> <li>• identifying other opportunities to ensure that attendance and punctuality maintain a high profile</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	This unit can be used by the behaviour and attendance leader, attendance manager and pastoral team: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• to review existing systems and strategies and evaluate their impact</li> <li>• to explore the possibilities for new approaches</li> </ul> Follow-up actions may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• agreeing roles and responsibilities</li> <li>• identifying resources</li> <li>• agreeing on necessary support for staff</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an improvement in attendance and punctuality;</li> <li>• a renewed awareness by the whole-school community of the importance placed on punctuality and attendance, for example demonstrated by: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>– a positive response from parents/carers to the postcards;</li> <li>– use of charts and discussions in tutorial time;</li> <li>– increased attendance at breakfast, homework or other clubs;</li> </ul> </li> <li>• increased numbers of pupils receiving rewards associated with good or improved punctuality or attendance;</li> <li>• a survey of pupils showing that they are aware of their attendance rate, personal and group targets and the link between attendance and attainment.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Everyday policies: rewards, sanctions and the promotion of positive behaviour Bullying Pupil support systems
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	Staff: Getting started 9.4S Developing organisational structures that promote regular attendance and punctuality
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Tackling Truancy Together</i> (DfEE 0084/2001)  Truancy Buster Awards 2001: Case Studies (DfES, 2001)  <i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack (ISBN 1860251765) and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack (ISBN 1873562942) (Both published by The Chalkface Project)  Suggestions for activities and worksheets to motivate those at risk of truancy  <i>Advice on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy</i> (DfES, 2003)  Annex C – Guidance on behaviour and attendance: attendance  <i>Ensuring regular school attendance</i> (DfES, 2003)  Guidance on the legal measures available to secure regular attendance  <i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 1</i> (DfES 0392-2003)  <i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2</i> (DfES 0055-2004)</p> <p>www.chalkface.com  The Chalkface Project  www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance  DfES improving attendance website – provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on school attendance  www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies  Includes examples of techniques used to raise attendance and reduce truancy</p>

# Developing systems to celebrate regular attendance and punctuality throughout the day

## Introduction

*When schools make attendance a high profile issue there is usually a positive reaction from pupils in terms of raised attendance and improved punctuality.*

*(Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools, Ofsted, 2001)*

Sustaining this profile and the momentum generated requires systems that acknowledge good and improved practice. Many schools celebrate achievements in attendance at the end of term and sometimes at awards evenings. Although this focus raises the profile intermittently, it can be too removed from the concept of 'daily attendance for learning'.

In schools where attendance and punctuality have consistently improved, all staff have taken responsibility for acknowledging these improvements with the pupils concerned. Examples of daily routines schools have adopted to celebrate these achievements include:

- verbal acknowledgment;
- displays in the foyer;
- encouragement through applause in assembly;
- contacting parents/carers, e.g. good news postcards, phone calls or letters home.

## Case Study: Falmer High School and rewards systems

In January 1998, Falmer High School was placed in Special Measures, due in part to poor attendance levels and truancy. The school implemented a number of strategies to promote attendance and reduce truancy, focusing predominantly on achieving 100% attendance.

These included:

- displaying weekly attendance charts in the tutor room. These place tutor groups in rank order, creating a spirit of competitiveness;
- displaying daily attendance printouts outside the main administrative offices, highlighting attendance percentages by year group;
- arranging a quiz game each Friday during morning registration, in which students answered a question such as 'Guess the combined weight of the senior management team'. Examples of prizes include a £5 WHSmith voucher; termly prize draw for all pupils with a 100% attendance. Prizes have included a weekend family leisure pass to the David Lloyd Leisure Centre and a hot-air balloon ride across East Sussex. Funding for prizes come from business sponsorship (BT, Brighton and Hove Albion) and through conference and examining fees received by the school;
- installation of an electronic attendance registration system (Bromcom). The use of the Internet and the launching of the school website supported this initiative;
- using information at: [www.mychildatschool.com](http://www.mychildatschool.com);
- appointment of an attendance manager to deal with all attendance issues, including analysis of data available from the electronic registration system;
- installation of a dedicated 'attendance' telephone line specifically for parents to inform school of absences.

A combination of rewards, cooperation and competitiveness led Falmer High School to achieve good progress and be removed from Special Measures in October 2000.

([www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/goodpractice](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/goodpractice))



### Activity 1

#### Reviewing and developing systems to celebrate regular attendance and punctuality

Use **Resource sheet 1** with a team of staff or on an individual basis to identify systems already in place and to highlight others that could be implemented. At the same time identify and allocate responsibility to named people. This will ensure that actions are carried out and attendance maintains a high profile.



## Activity 2

**Resource sheet 2** contains examples of materials that have been used successfully in schools to celebrate good attendance and punctuality. The resource sheet shows:

- a good news postcard sent to pupils or parents/carers to acknowledge improvement, sustained high performance or effort made with regard to attendance, academic progress and behaviour;
- posters on improved punctuality designed to ensure a high profile;
- a poster saying 'Well done' displayed in tutor rooms when attendance has improved or a high level of attendance is sustained – personal acknowledgement which encourages a sense of 'team' and peer support within the tutor group.

Consider how each example could be adapted for use within your school.

Consider what other materials you might want to develop to help promote regular attendance and punctuality in your school.



## Activity 3

For those schools in challenging circumstances, improving and sustaining high levels of attendance and punctuality can be extremely difficult. Examine the case study below, which describes how Ockendon School, Essex, developed systems to celebrate and maintain good attendance and punctuality in order to address this issue. Consider how these ideas might be adapted for your own school.

## Case study

### Context

Ockendon School went into Special Measures in February 2000; one of the key issues identified was attendance and punctuality. Attendance stood at 85% and 197 of 600 pupils had one or more unauthorised absences. Unauthorised absence was over 3%.

### Background

The school's new headteacher and leadership team made attendance and punctuality one of their priorities. Brent Dickinson (deputy headteacher) took a decisive role in tackling this issue. There are no 'quick fix' solutions to the problems faced by the school but the school action plan is helping address the key issues identified by Ofsted.

### Measures to raise attendance

An attendance officer was appointed and trained to a high standard. The Education Welfare Officer formally meets with the deputy headteacher every week and speaks to him daily. This close working relationship has been instrumental to improving performance. A range of training opportunities has been put in place for staff.



## Case study continued

Attendance targets are set for the whole school, each year group, each form and each student. Attendance and punctuality figures are read out in year assemblies every week. These are displayed in the main reception area, which all students pass through many times every day, and in individual form rooms. A great deal of time and effort has been invested in developing positive relationships with students and parents. First day contact operates for any student who is absent. If telephone contact is not possible then a letter is sent that afternoon. Two further letters are available for longer absences. Attendance is included in all termly reports. Students whose attendance falls below 95% receive a letter informing them of this.

All students whose attendance is a cause for concern have a specially designed review sheet drawn up. All data and actions taken are carefully logged. These form the first part of the weekly meeting with the EWS. They are also regularly reviewed to ensure that the most appropriate and effective action is being taken.

All students with 100% attendance are presented with special certificates in the celebration assemblies every term. These are very special events and are hugely appreciated by students and staff and are very well supported by parents.

Special plaques are also presented to individual students for most improved attendance and most improved punctuality. The school focuses on the importance of students being involved in their own learning. All staff reinforce the message that you need to be here if you are going to learn. We have taken a very lateral view about developing ways to encourage students to attend and learn.

We have also set up the Ockendon School Community Liaison Group, which meets half-termly and involves all local agencies. The group's aim is to share information quickly and effectively, to generate ideas and develop strategies to meet the needs of our most challenging students.

On their termly visits, Ofsted inspectors always identified the good progress being made and highlighted how we tackled this key issue of attendance vigorously. In October 2002 the school came out of Special Measures. Attendance rates are now higher than 91% and unauthorised absence has fallen to 0.2%. The number of students with one or more unauthorised absences has dramatically fallen from 197 to 11 between February 2000 and the current time. These improvements are due to the fact that we continue to make attendance a high priority and because we have tackled this problem on so many fronts.

*(Tackling Trunacy Together)*

Discuss with staff whether any of the measures taken by Ockendon School would work in your school and how all staff might support them.

## Summary

By the end of this unit staff will have:

- discussed current practice in the school relating to the celebration of good attendance and punctuality;
- considered other strategies for celebrating good attendance and punctuality, including how and when they will be implemented.



# Systems for supporting and celebrating regular attendance and punctuality throughout the day

Strategy	Actions	Celebrate
Vigilance – keep a watchful eye on attendance trends, follow procedures and be proactive not reactive.	Scrutinise weekly: overall attendance, by year, by day, by gender. Map outcomes to preceding weeks. Let everyone know trends and expectations.	Reward tutor groups, cohorts, pupils and staff. Display an attendance board with last week's figures and those of the week so far. Surround with accolades.
Expectation of consistency and accuracy when marking registers.	Ensure that all staff are informed and trained in the standards required for taking and marking a register. This includes temporary staff. Issue a bulleted summary sheet for reference.	Involve the EWO and heads of year in deciding on the cohort with the most accurate registers each term. Reward the team. Use staff briefings to share information. Display in the staff room the total number of unrecorded marks on registers per week. Place bets on the next week.
Model an expectation of punctuality from the whole-school community.	Display posters around the school. Ask subject leaders to monitor their team (e.g. using spot checks at the beginning of lessons).	All staff to acknowledge and praise pupils for punctuality. Carry out a whole-school spot check and give feedback to pupils the following day on the positives. Subject leaders acknowledge good practice in the team.
Regularly praise high levels of attendance and improved attendance.	Keep attendance high on the agenda. Use assemblies, parents' evenings, letters to parents/carers, pupil log books to inform.	Send certificates home celebrating parent/carer and pupil partnership for maintaining/improving attendance. Reward when personal/group targets are met.
Use opportunities to correlate regular attendance to academic achievement.	When pupils achieve academically, reinforce regular attendance as a key reason.	Use assemblies and parents' evenings to reinforce key messages and celebrate achievement in attendance and the impact on attainment.
Ensure that the attendance policy is understood by all staff including temporary staff and is applied consistently	Provide a bulleted crib sheet with key points on attendance/punctuality protocols and expectations.	Monitor consistency and give positive feedback and praise to all staff.

# Resource sheet 1

page 2 of 2

Strategy	Actions	Celebrate
Use every opportunity to demonstrate to pupils that staff care about and value their attendance. For example, staff show genuine concern when a pupil has been absent and offer support on their return. This will also support pupils who are bullied and need support to attend school. (Section 4: Bullying – Staff: How to understand and support pupils who are bullied.)	Exploit opportunities for building staff–pupil relationships. For example, introduce a house system where pupils and staff share an allegiance.	Form groups with form tutor praised and rewarded for attendance achievement. Subject teachers actively promote attendance to their lessons. Subject leaders praise and reward groups and teachers with high attendance.
Offer extracurricular activities to tap into pupils' interests.	Provide a breakfast club with the dual role of nourishing pupils in preparation for the day and getting them in on time. It is also a good opportunity for supporting relationship building between pupils and staff (when staff understand the long-term benefit they sometimes join pupils for breakfast a couple of mornings a week).	Acknowledge and praise regular attendance. Offer reward points that can be collected and traded in for breakfast. Use raffle tickets given out in the morning to pupils attending on time so that they can win instant prizes.

Postcard



Dear .....

Xxxxxxxx School would like to congratulate Anthony for improving his attendance over these last two weeks.

We would like to thank you for the support you and your family offer Anthony and hope we can continue working in partnership.

76 Attend Road  
Punctuality Place  
West Midlands  
B76 8JK

Good attendance is the key to learning.

## Resource sheet 3

### Punctuality posters

While the administration staff are recording late arrivals to school they could note the number of minutes late and total these. By Friday you will have the total number of minutes late for the week. Display this information and celebrate improvements.

*Note:* are administration staff briefed on signs that possibly indicate that a pupil is being bullied (for example on the way to school) and do they know who to report their concerns to? (Section 4: Bullying – Staff: How to understand and support pupils who are bullied.)

#### How punctual are we?

<p>Last week:</p> <p><b>Total number of late arrivals = 38</b></p> <p><b>Total time missed = 197 minutes (3 hours 17 min)</b></p>	<p>This week so far:</p> <p>Total number of late arrivals = 20</p> <p><b>Total time missed = 95 minutes (1 hour 45 min)</b></p>
---	---

one day to go -  
so be on time!

With e-registration, spot checks on late arrivals to lessons would also produce some interesting data to be used with pupils.

#### Posters saying 'Well done'

The headteacher and all the senior staff want to say to 9SB

**congratulations!**

for maintaining a high level of attendance

**96%**

9 Attendance Unit: 9.3S	
<b>Title</b>	Systems and structures to support the subject teacher in promoting good attendance
<b>Level</b>	Ready for more
<b>Audience</b>	Teachers and teaching assistants
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To emphasise the link between classroom ethos and attendance</li> <li>To raise the awareness of subject teachers about their responsibility to support the attendance of all pupils</li> <li>To support the development of effective lessons that engage pupils' interest and encourage their attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<p>Curriculum leaders can use this unit to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>discuss at curriculum meetings;</li> <li>plan to share good practice;</li> <li>generate ideas on 'what else could we do?';</li> <li>use department meetings to introduce new strategies and approaches.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>more teachers and teaching assistants showing in their practice a greater appreciation of the relationship between effective teaching and attendance;</li> <li>greater levels of engagement and participation in lessons, from identified poor attenders;</li> <li>an improvement in attendance of all identified pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	<p>Everyday policies: rewards, sanctions and the promotion of positive behaviour</p> <p>Curriculum</p> <p>Developing good starters</p>
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	<p>Staff: Developing good practice</p> <p>9.7S Developing good starters and plenaries to encourage regular attendance and punctuality</p>
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 1</i> (DfES 0392-2003)</p> <p><i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2</i> (DfES 0055-2004)</p> <p><i>Tackling Truancy Together</i> (DfEE 0084/2001)</p> <p>Truancy Buster Awards 2001: Case Studies DfES (2001)</p> <p><i>Ensuring regular school attendance</i></p> <p>Guidance on the legal measures available to secure regular attendance (DfES 2003)</p> <p><i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack (ISBN 1860251765) and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack (ISBN 1873562942) (Both published by The Chalkface Project)</p> <p>Suggestions for activities and worksheets to motivate those at risk of truancy</p> <p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance</a></p> <p>DfES improving attendance website – provides research information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on school attendance</p> <p><a href="http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies">www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies</a></p> <p>Includes examples of techniques used to raise attendance and reduce truancy</p> <p><a href="http://www.chalkface.com">www.chalkface.com</a></p> <p>The Chalkface Project</p>

# Systems and structures to support the subject teacher in promoting good attendance

## Introduction

The whole school community has a responsibility to promote good attendance. Subject teachers/teaching assistants have a key role to play, not least because of the relationship between classroom climate and a pupil's attitude and behaviour.



### Activity 1

Ask teachers and teaching assistants to consider the following questions:

- What are pupils feeling when they are in my lesson?
- How do I know?
- Are all pupils feeling the same?

Look at the pupil comments on **Resource sheet 1**. Although this is not an exhaustive list, the points do illustrate the link between classroom feelings and positive learning. Time spent out of lessons is lost learning, and the pupil returns less able to follow the work.

(Refer to Key Stage 3 *Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 1* and *Core day 2*, for more information on classroom climate and developing positive relationships.)

Ask teachers/teaching assistants to work together to consider the following:

- To what extent do pupils feel valued and secure?
- What evidence do we have that that is how they feel?
- What could we do to help improve the way pupils feel in this lesson?

## Promoting group identity

Group identity is a positive feature of welcoming lessons. Staff who use inclusive language such as 'we' promote unity and a sense of belonging. Good attendance is mentioned and rewarded. Many pupils enjoy allegiance with a member of staff and don't like to let them down. As the group makes progress, the link to regular attendance can be continually endorsed. In the same way, absentees are supported by the whole group to catch up so that everyone realises that missing lessons does matter.

## Analysing lesson attendance

Electronic lesson registration eases the process of identifying patterns of attendance. However, it is still possible to identify patterns from paper registers. Through effective monitoring, it is possible to detect attendance patterns, such as the time of day, term, week or lesson period. This in turn should raise a series of questions – such as in the following example of a teacher's own assessment of attendance in her classes.



Are there any patterns of non-attendance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance by 9T on Thursday lesson 6 is poor.</li> <li>• Gerry is always absent on Monday lesson 1.</li> <li>• There are always at least three pupils absent from 8M but rarely the same pupils.</li> <li>• Friday is generally the worst day for absences.</li> </ul>
Is this only happening in my lessons or does this correlate with: a) the rest of my department; b) overall school attendance?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Does attendance of Year 9 pupils drop on Thursdays a) in the department; b) overall?</li> <li>• Is Gerry absent from lesson 1 for the rest of the week?</li> <li>• What is the attendance like for 8M in other lessons?</li> <li>• Is the overall attendance poor on Fridays in a) this subject; b) overall?</li> </ul>

This teacher went further and considered how to address the patterns she found.

Question	Action
Do pupils want to attend my lessons? Why?	Ask a random sample of pupils or get feedback from a few form tutors who have discussed the curriculum with their group.
When was the last time I was observed?	An observation by my head of department or a colleague may give me indicators.
Where do I go to find out more about Gerry so I can support him?	Arrange a meeting with Gerry's mentor. Consult with colleagues who teach him in lesson 1. Consult with teaching assistants who support his group.
How can I support the whole-school focus on Year 8 attendance?	Closely monitor the attendance of the group. Set a group target and negotiate an incentive. Allocate responsibilities to pupils.
What can I do to encourage 9T to attend Thursday lesson 6?	Deliver the objectives through activities that motivate. Make this the key lesson of the week so that pupils value its importance.



## Activity 2

Ask teachers/teaching assistants to undertake an analysis of attendance at their lessons, based on the example above.

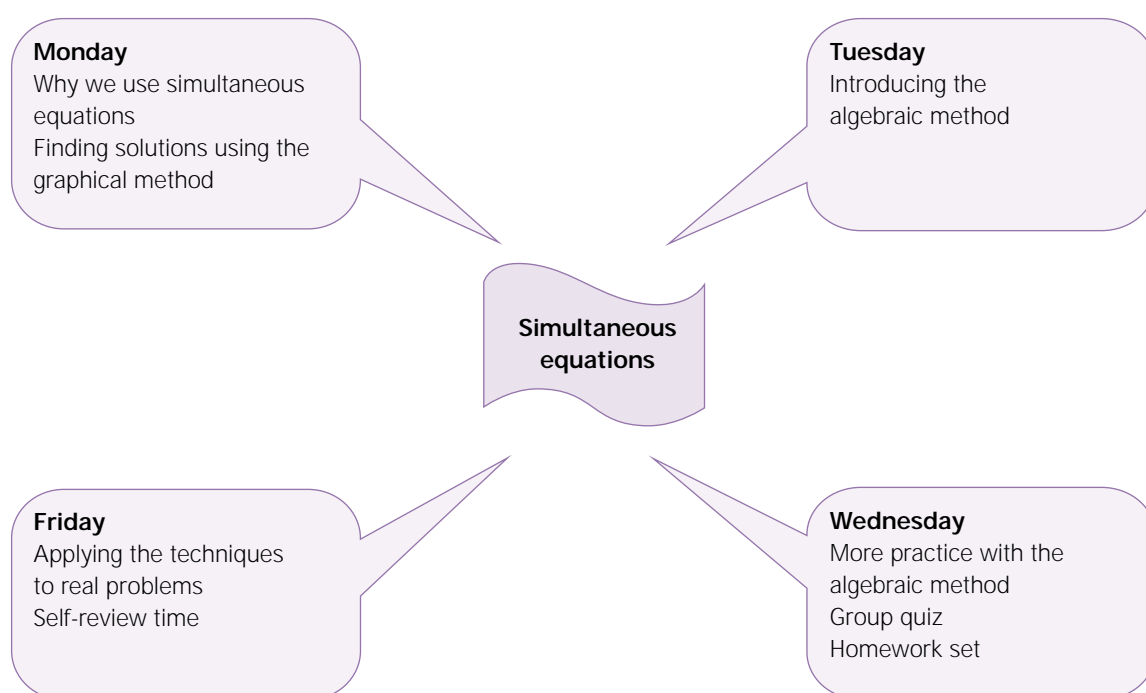
## Promoting lesson attendance

The subject teacher/teaching assistant can introduce a range of activities to encourage attendance but they all need to be underpinned by effective classroom practice.

The examples that follow present just a few approaches to promoting lesson attendance.

## Attendance for learning

This idea comes from a mathematics teacher in a school trying to improve attendance. The teacher used a visual map of the week (but it could be the term or the topic) to show pupils what they will be learning. The teacher refers to it at the beginning and end of the lesson and also appends sticky notes as reminders related to attendance such as: *Sophia absent, to sit with Jake on Tuesday. Jerry and Nikita request extra support on Wednesday.*



## Activity 3

Ask teachers/teaching assistants to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the approach outlined in the example above. How could they apply it (or an adapted version of it) to help promote attendance in their lessons?

## Rewards

Introducing rewards that acknowledge progress, improvement or attainment can usefully incorporate attendance as a key factor. The same teacher quoted above uses a Mathematician of the Week award, featuring full attendance as one of the criteria.

Similar awards can be presented to pupils who have made progress after a return from an absence or have been punctual to every lesson. The key is to focus on all the factors that have contributed to the attainment.

### Mathematician of the Week

Awarded to **Alec Gregory** on 11 October 2003 for:

- demonstrating a clear understanding of Pythagorean triangles
- attending all four lessons
- working cooperatively in the group work sessions

Signed



### Activity 4

Ask teachers/teaching assistants to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the approach outlined in the example above. How could they apply it (or an adapted version of it) to help promote attendance in their lessons? Consider how a system of rewards could be created to help promote good attendance and punctuality.

## Assessment for learning

The more pupils are:

- informed about learning objectives;
- involved in the assessment process;
- given time to reflect on progress;
- included in decisions about support;

the more they understand the importance and impact of good attendance.

One system that can support this process is a two-way diary at the front of the pupil's exercise book. Key objectives for each lesson are recorded and pupils, teachers and teaching assistants can make comments with regard to supporting learning. Absence is also recorded.

For this system to be successful it has to be managed by the pupils and overseen by staff.

If a school is interested in introducing this or a similar system, then starting on a trial basis with one department and one cohort will iron out any flaws, allow the school to evaluate the process and assess its impact. The key to success is the ownership and value placed on the system by both pupils and staff.

An example is shown on the following page.

Autumn term 2003	Key objectives	Start page	Pupil comment	Staff support
Week 1 – 3 Sep 5 Sep	Generate terms of a sequence	1	Understood all this. No problems.	
Week 2 – 10 Sep 12 Sep	Generate sequences from practical situations	5	I think I need more practice. I can't get the sequence started.	Read my notes on page 6 and try the question I have included on page 7.
Week 3 – 17 Sep 19 Sep	Construct functions arising from real-life problems		Absent. Absent. I am sorted now, thanks.	I will copy notes from Julie and see Mr Sum on Monday 29 Oct 3:30.
Week 4 – 24 Sep 26 Sep	Recap on the four rules of fractions	8	All sorted on +, -, ? but division is something else.	Reading your notes again will help. You coped well with the homework. Some helpful hints will be given out next Friday. Be there!
Week 5 – 1 Oct 3 Oct	No lesson Use proportional reasoning to solve a problem	15	The starter activity has made division of fractions much clearer. Need more time on today's topic.	



### Activity 5

Ask teachers/teaching assistants to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the approach outlined in the example above. How could they apply it (or an adapted version of it) to help promote attendance in their lessons?



## Activity 6

Ask teachers/teaching assistants to consider the following two case studies. They should also discuss an example of a pupil they currently work with who is not attending their lessons regularly.

- Kieran's Mum always writes a note saying that he is ill to cover the fact that Kieran wants to stay at home with her – often on days when he has French.
- Shauna panics about not being able to cope with her English coursework. When the stress becomes too much she stays away from school.

For the case studies above and your own examples, decide what approaches could be used to help promote good attendance. Consider approaches from the examples in this unit and those on **Resource sheet 2**, plus any other ideas that may be appropriate. These approaches could form part of a staff handbook or be publicised in the staffroom.

## The use of plans

You may consider:

- a plan devised by, for example, the form tutor, attendance officer, head of year or SENCO. The pupil is set agreed targets (parents/carers may be involved) and staff support these targets by adhering to the suggested strategies;
- a plan devised by an individual teacher to maximise the engagement of the pupil in their lesson and to give the pupil reasons for attending, for example:
  - giving the pupil some responsibility in lessons;
  - asking them for help with gathering materials for the next lesson;
  - regularly acknowledging how much they have learnt and the progress made;
  - ensuring that parents/carers are informed of progress;
  - working closely with the teaching assistant/learning mentor so the pupil feels valued and cared for;
  - good communication between staff so that skills learnt in one subject are acknowledged and used in another.

Where appropriate, plans can be linked to or form part of a pupils existing IEP.



## Activity 7

Ask teachers/teaching assistants to consider the strengths and weaknesses of the approach outlined in the example above. How could they apply it (or an adapted version of it) to help promote attendance in their lessons and where would they use it?

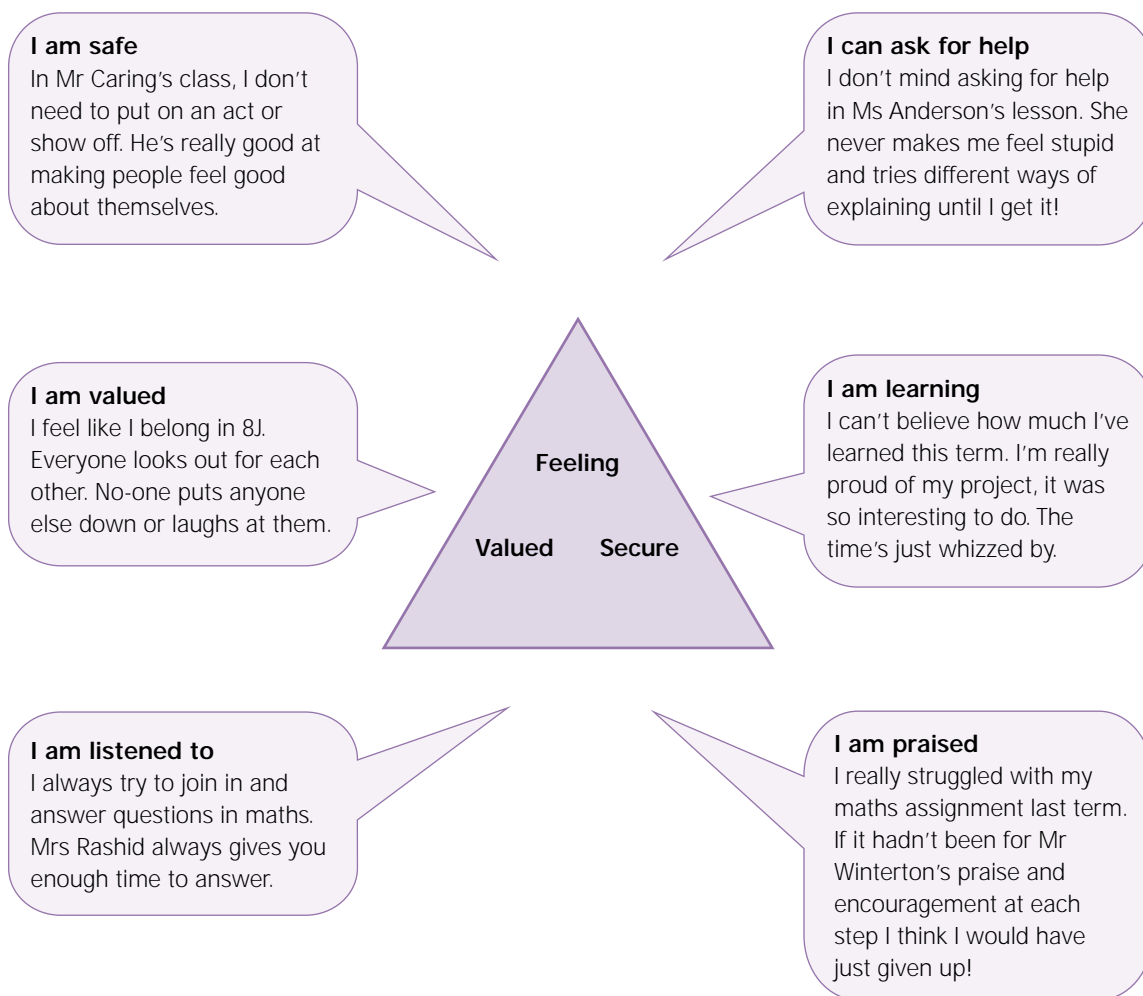
## Summary

By the end of this unit:

- staff will have a better understanding of the impact of classroom ethos on attendance;
- subject teachers will appreciate that they have a key role to play in supporting the attendance of pupils they teach.



## Resource sheet 1



## Resource sheet 2

### Ten ways to improve attendance in your lessons

1. Use **praise** which emphasises the importance of attendance for learning.
2. Integrate late arrivals quickly and smoothly by planning appropriate **starter activities**.
3. Apply the **code of conduct** for late arrivals consistently and fairly.
4. Give pupils the **big picture** about the unit of work.
5. **Welcome** all pupils – make them feel **valued**.
6. **Integrate** returning pupils and inconsistent attenders by considering key tools such as differentiation, peer support, seating plans and catch-up materials.
7. **Know** who is attending and who isn't. **Find out why**.
8. Include in the **plenary** a plug for the next lesson or use a cliffhanger approach. Stress the importance of attending the next lesson.
9. Use one-to-one opportunities to acknowledge and praise **individual improvements** in attendance. Relate it to improved learning.
10. Deliver the **curriculum in a way** that makes all pupils want to come to lessons!



9 Attendance Unit: 9.4S	
<b>Title</b>	Developing organisational structures that promote regular attendance and punctuality
<b>Level</b>	Getting started
<b>Audience</b>	Staff
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support a review of systems to promote attendance and punctuality</li> <li>To support consideration of organisational structures using case study material</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Senior leadership team meet to review school systems and discuss case studies</li> <li>Senior leadership team propose developments/introduction of organisational structures</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a thorough evaluation of existing practice that results in improvements and additions which are fit for purpose;</li> <li>staff incorporating the modified or new procedures in their daily work;</li> <li>an improvement in attendance and punctuality of all pupils/identified pupils;</li> <li>increase in efficiency of organisational structures.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Classroom behaviour
<b>Links to other materials in this section</b>	Staff: Getting started 9.1S Developing and managing effective data collection systems
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Tackling Truancy Together</i> (DfEE 0084/2001) Truancy Buster Awards 2001: Case Studies</p> <p><i>Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools</i> (Ofsted 2001)</p> <p><i>Advice on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy</i> (DfES, 2003) Annex C – Guidance on behaviour and attendance: attendance</p> <p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/</a> DfES improving attendance website – provides research information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on schools attendance</p>

# Developing organisational structures that promote regular attendance and punctuality

## Introduction

In schools where improvements in attendance and punctuality have been sustained, the measures taken to achieve this have been embedded within the overall organisational structures.

Many schools have found that while a renewed emphasis on attendance can bring some relatively quick improvements, sustaining that progress can be challenging and sometimes imply systemic and cultural change.



### Activity 1

Use the list of structures and systems to promote attendance and punctuality on **Resource sheet 1** as a starting point for discussion by the senior leadership team, a representative staff group or an attendance committee convened by a member of the senior leadership team. (An attendance committee might include representatives of the governing body, pastoral team, ESW Service, local community leader, police, attendance manager. Further information on setting up school attendance committees can be found in *Tackling Truancy Together*, [www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance).)

Resource sheet 1 could be used to:

- note the structures that are well established and effective in your school (column 2);
- reflect on the sources of evidence that support your findings (column 3);
- identify structures and systems that you want to explore further;
- prioritise the actions to form an attendance action plan;
- discuss the effectiveness/efficiency of the structures on Resource sheet 1 and suggest modifications.

Once the plan has been formulated it is useful to distribute it for wider consultation accompanied by contextual evidence, some of which may have been obtained through the audit process.



## Activity 2

**Resource sheet 2** provides three case studies, each focusing on a school that, through the audit process, has identified attendance as an area for development. The case studies outline successful strategies that the schools used to combat truancy and promote a culture that encourages good attendance.

Discuss the case studies:

- to identify any examples of practice that you may be developing or considering in your school;
- to identify examples of practice that you would like to establish in your school and consider how this might be achieved.

**Resource sheet 3** highlights the 'traffic light' approach adopted in some of Bradford's schools. Discuss whether this systematic approach to school attendance would work in your school and identify who would play what role within such a structure.

## Summary

By the end of the unit:

- staff will have reviewed the school system and organisational structures for promoting attendance and punctuality;
- improvements will have been identified and plans drawn up for their development and implementation.



## Resource sheet 1

Systems and structures	In place?	Sources of evidence/ developmental strategies	Actions
Clearly understood attendance policy, consistently applied		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The value placed on attendance is clearly evident. It is an integral part of school ethos</li> <li>Registers are accurately completed</li> <li>Late arrivals are dealt with consistently</li> <li>There are regular reminders to staff of their responsibility to promote regular attendance</li> <li>All staff are enabled to contribute to improving and maintaining pupils' attendance</li> <li>Good practice from effective form tutors and departments with consistently high attendance is identified and shared</li> <li>Parental/carers responsibilities made explicit and supported by a home-school partnership</li> <li>Parents/carers seek permission before booking holidays in school time</li> </ul>	
A system to ensure that staff are regularly reminded of their responsibilities for pupils' attendance			
Attendance highlighted in home-school agreement			
Parent/carers guidance on responsibilities and school support			
Attendance policy included in new parent/carers literature			
First-day caller		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parents/carers and the school work in partnership to communicate on the first day of absence</li> <li>There is collation and analysis of attendance data to identify trends and enable actions to be taken</li> </ul>	
Electronic registration			
Role of school data manager			
Staff access to attendance data			

Systems and structures	In place?	Sources of evidence/ developmental strategies	Actions
Breakfast club		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reduction in late arrivals</li> </ul>	
Lunch and after-school activities		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good attendance in lunch and after-school activities</li> </ul>	
Programme involving the local community, parents/carers, local business, police, religious leaders, etc.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Active involvement of the local community supports and engages pupils</li> <li>All pupils are given the same opportunities and are actively encouraged to be involved</li> </ul>	
Weekly tutor group/year group targets		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attendance is high profile. Staff and pupils talk about attendance</li> <li>Good attendance is celebrated</li> <li>Pupils know their current attendance figures and targets</li> <li>Praise, encouragement and rewards are evident</li> </ul>	
Posters promoting regular attendance			
Training for support staff		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>All staff acknowledge the importance of attendance for learning and encourage and utilise all opportunities to sustain the high profile</li> <li>The correlation between attendance and attainment is made explicit and celebrated</li> </ul>	
Attendance on the programme for parents evenings and awards evenings			

Systems and structures	In place?	Sources of evidence/ developmental strategies	Actions
Effective anti-bullying policy		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective systems that protect and support all pupils</li> <li>Pupils voice is respected and acted upon</li> <li>Pupils feel that school is a safe place to be</li> <li>Pupils know where to seek help. Service level agreement with key agencies</li> <li>Regular planned liaison and case review meetings</li> <li>Agreed case referrals with clear shared expectations</li> </ul>	
Pupil reintegration programme			
Mentoring scheme			
Peer support networks			
School council			
Early identification of at-risk pupils. Clear and established referral arrangements with Education Welfare Service			
Strong links with primary partners		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Staff are aware of potential non-attenders before entry to the school and work collaboratively with the primary school and other support agencies</li> </ul>	

## Resource sheet 2

### Case study 1

<b>School profile</b> Secondary school Age range: 11–18 No. of pupils: 1230 FSM: 28%	<b>The situation in 1998–99</b> Level of unauthorised absence: 3.0% Level of authorised absence: 7.2% <b>The outcome in 2000–01</b> Level of unauthorised absence: 1.9% Level of authorised absence: 6.2%	<b>Issues</b> Data collection and analysis did not give sufficient feedback about attendance to staff, pupils and parents/carers. Truancy was high in Key Stage 4 and attendance issues were emerging with low-attaining pupils in Key Stage 3
<b>Actions</b> Using funding provided by the LEA, the school purchased an electronic attendance registration system. This allowed the management team to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• gain access to more detailed, accurate and up-to-date attendance information;</li> <li>• highlight patterns of non-attendance to tutors and parents/carers during reviews and agree pupils' targets for attendance.</li> </ul> The strategy significantly benefited pupils whose attendance rates were between 75% and 89% and enabled the establishment of attendance statistics, which are now published in a graph in the weekly parents/carers bulletin and displayed on noticeboards for pupils around the school. In combating persistent truancy additional measures were introduced. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• after-school activities involving learning mentors and special needs educators to ensure that all pupils could participate. For example: five-a-side football, a homework drop-in centre, an astronomy club;</li> <li>• regular emphasis on the correlation between regular attendance and attainment;</li> <li>• projection of a safer and friendlier image of the school in order to reach the whole community;</li> <li>• reforming the Key Stage 4 curriculum. Introducing an Awards Scheme Course and Foundation GNVQs and use of a vocational project for specific Year 11 pupils.</li> </ul>		
<b>Next steps</b> Use the transfer network to find out more about pupils with poor attendance patterns before they enter Year 7. Offer appropriate support and a 'fresh start' approach from day 1.		



## Case study 2

<b>School profile</b> Special school Age range: 12–18 No. of pupils: 119	<b>The situation in 1998–99</b> Level of unauthorised absence: 12.4% Level of authorised absence: 15.2% <b>The outcome in 2000–01</b> Level of unauthorised absence: 3.1% Level of authorised absence: 8.4%	<b>Issues</b> From the audit process evidence showed that staff, pupils and parents/carers were complacent about attendance. Policy was weak and not adhered to.
<b>Actions</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>After consultation with the staff and governors it was agreed that the profile of attendance needed to be raised. Strategies included the introduction of:                         <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>attendance as an agenda item at all staff meetings;</li> <li>letters to parents/carers always including a section on attendance. The letters always included: legal requirements; the impact on attainment and the willingness by the school to support where there were concerns;</li> <li>close monitoring of daily attendance rates with improvements and concerns regularly relayed to staff, pupils and parents/carers;</li> <li>termly attendance reviews with governors and a willingness to regularly review and revise the attendance policy.</li> </ul> </li> <li>An attendance folder is available for all staff, which incorporates self-monitoring attendance sheets for pupils.</li> <li>The Education Welfare Service provides training to all staff on completion of attendance registers and assistance with monitoring procedures – the behaviour and attendance policy guidance now supports this process.</li> <li>Individual attendance targets are set for all pupils. Best results are awarded with certificates or merits. Every half-term, governors meet parents/carers of students whose attendance has fallen below 90% or has risen significantly.</li> <li>Regular use is made of the ability to disapply the National Curriculum at Key Stage 4 to allow for work-related and vocational studies.</li> <li>The headteacher holds weekly meetings with the Education Welfare Service to discuss individual pupils. If necessary, arrangements are made to transport persistent truants to school.</li> </ul>		
<b>Next steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establish a 'free' breakfast club run by pupils for pupils.</li> <li>Implement an electronic attendance registration system to improve data collection and analysis.</li> </ul>		

## Resource sheet 2 page 3 of 3

## Case study 3

<b>School profile</b> Secondary school Age range: 13–18 No. of pupils: 710	<b>The situation in 1998–99</b> Level of unauthorised absence: 2.0% Level of authorised absence: 7.6% <b>The outcome in 2000–01</b> Level of unauthorised absence: 0.6% Level of authorised absence: 6.0%	<b>Issues</b> There was very poor attendance in Year 11. There was a high level of truancy with no specific pattern. Attendance was not valued by pupils. Staff were frustrated by the impact inconsistent attendance was having on planning and teaching.
<b>Actions</b> After a review of behaviour and attendance by the behaviour and attendance working party (a cross-section of staff and the Education Welfare Officer) it was agreed that actions were required to tackle truancy and poor attendance. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• introducing a work-related curriculum specifically for persistent truants in Year 11. This entails dividing a pupil's schooling between school, work and college. For example, one pupil spends two days at school, one day with a work placement at the local builders' merchant, one day at the local college on a bricklaying and painting/decorating vocational course and one day with career officers and community workers;</li> <li>• first-day contact by phone to all parents/carers whose child is absent without the school's knowledge;</li> <li>• displaying attendance charts in form rooms as an incentive to combat truancy. Arranging form and year group competitions;</li> <li>• individual certificates and prizes to pupils for good and improved attendance;</li> <li>• regular workshops for teachers, in liaison with the Education Welfare Service, to discuss attendance issues. This allows staff to get a better understanding of the reasons why pupils truant and gives an opportunity for discussions and self-reflection time to consider what encourages pupils to attend and what more the school could do to improve attendance.</li> </ul>		
<b>Next steps</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduce an electronic registration system to support the analysis of different patterns of attendance within and across cohorts on a daily and lesson-by-lesson basis.</li> <li>• Introduce a breakfast club to further improve punctuality and attendance.</li> </ul>		

## Resource sheet 3

### Traffic light approach to attendance

A group of schools in Bradford used the concept of traffic lights to put together a programme to help address attendance problems. There were positive results, including challenging cultural attitudes condoning absence.

#### Week 1 Initial letter

A letter is sent to parents/carers indicating that every child in a year group or the whole school will have their attendance monitored for a four-week period and stressing the importance of attendance and links to attainment. Clear targets will be set.

#### Weeks 2–5 Monitoring period

Monitor attendance of all children (optional additional letter sent to parents/carers reminding them of the scheme).

#### Week 6 First review

Meeting with key school staff to review attendance data and to filter out pupils to be excluded from the initiative.

Students are then divided into achievement groups:

##### *Green group*

Students achieve the target attendance; all parents/carers receive a letter of congratulations.

##### *Amber group*

Students achieve between 80% and 89% attendance; an amber letter is sent and a new monitoring period is set with clear targets.

##### *Red group*

Students achieve below 80% attendance; a red letter is sent and a new attendance target is set.

#### Weeks 7–10

Monitoring attendance of amber and red groups.

#### Week 11

Meet with key school staff to review data.

At this point, if amber groups do not meet their target, they are reviewed by an informal panel.

Red group members meet a formal panel.

#### Week 11

Prepare school for panel meetings.

#### Week 12

Panel meetings

## Resource sheet 3 page 2 of 2

### Weeks 13–16

Monitoring attendance

### Week 17

Meeting with school staff to review attendance.

Depending on the groupings, different combinations of meetings occur between school and parent/carer and student or student alone with school. Discussions take place, new targets are set and letters are sent home. If the student fails to attend and this continues to be the case, the school will start preparing prosecution papers. Otherwise letters of congratulations are sent home and the case is closed.

([www.teachernet.gov.uk/CaseStudies](http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/CaseStudies))

9 Attendance Unit: 9.5S	
<b>Title</b>	Managing internal truancy
<b>Category</b>	Developing good practice
<b>Audience</b>	Staff
<b>Purpose</b>	This resource will support schools in: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>exploring solutions to issues of internal truancy</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	The behaviour and attendance leader supported by pastoral and curriculum leaders can use the three activities as a whole unit or individually to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>gauge the value staff place on existing systems;</li> <li>measure staff confidence in these systems and how consistently they are applied;</li> <li>gather the views of staff relating to potential developments of new systems.</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved staff confidence in managing internal truancy;</li> <li>a reduction in the number of incidents of internal truancy.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Pupil support systems Everyday policies: rewards, sanctions and the promotion of positive behaviour Bullying
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	Staff: Developing good practice 9.2S Developing systems to celebrate regular attendance and punctuality throughout the day
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/DfESimprovingattendance/">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/DfESimprovingattendance/</a> – provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on attendance.</p> <p><a href="http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies/">www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies/</a> Includes examples of techniques used to raise attendance and reduce truancy.</p> <p>The Chalkface Project (<a href="http://www.chalkface.com">www.chalkface.com</a>) <i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack. Suggestions for activities and worksheets to promote attendance.</p>

# Managing internal truancy

## Introduction

Overall attendance rates can mask internal problems with truancy. Therefore it is important that schools incorporate methods for monitoring attendance at lessons. Practice ranges from electronic systems that send immediate data to a central collecting point through to random spot checks with paper registers.

Internal truancy is usually considered to be truancy that occurs selectively within the school day around certain lessons or particular periods, with pupils usually returning for other lessons.

## Reasons for internal truancy

The causes of internal truancy are many and can be complex. Unlike out-of-school truancy, the pupil feels constrained to stay in the school building, it's grounds, or at least in the locality. Reasons are often related to a particular lesson rather than school in general. Reasons given by pupils for non-attendance at lessons often conceal deeper issues. Beneath one reason may lie another. For example, the pupil who truants because a mate suggests it may well be responding to deeper disaffection or difficulty. The following activity can be used to raise staff awareness of these reasons.

The activity can be most usefully carried out with a cross section of staff and other agencies supporting school in order to gain further insight, for example, the school attendance manager, EWO, learning mentors, teaching assistants and members of the pastoral team.

*Kinder, Wakefield and Wilkin (1996) report on interviews with 160 children in Year 7 and above. For the children, the main causes of truancy and disruption are described (in rank order) as:*

- *The influence of friends and peers, who are seen encouraging truancy as a status-seeking activity or as a way of joining in or blending in, and sometimes teasing or goading the child into truanting*
- *Relationships with teachers, seen as lacking respect/fairness*
- *The content and delivery of the curriculum, seen as lacking in relevance and stimulus*
- *Family factors, either parental attitudes or family problems*
- *Bullying*
- *The classroom context, either because of teachers' inability to control, or problems arising from the child's own personality or learning abilities.*

*(The Causes and Effects of Truancy, SCRE Newsletter No 71 – Winter 2002 (www.teachernet))*



## Activity1

The reasons for internal truancy quoted on **Resource sheet 1** are collated from the views of pupils. Add any reasons that are commonly expressed by pupils in your school.

Ask participants to discuss:

- how far the reasons given are understandable;
- how easy it would be to address and resolve each issue;
- how to approach both the teacher who is 'avoided' and the pupil who is 'avoiding'.  
Suggest some useful forms of words to start;
- who might be best placed to intervene with staff who are 'avoided';
- how we can promote classroom survival skills with individual pupils;
- how teaching assistant's can take the role of 'classroom mediators';
- what the role of middle-managers in supporting subject staff might be;
- what temporary respite measures could be put in place for both teachers and pupils;
- what skills are needed by staff to help reduce internal truancy;
- how the views of pupils could be further explored in order to inform future plans to reduce internal truancy.

It can be difficult to find the best way to approach a member of staff about lessons that pupils seem to avoid. Sometimes the problem is easy to resolve because it goes back to a poor choice of option, inaccurate setting or group chemistry. The issue is likely to be much more difficult to discuss and to resolve when the pupil is avoiding the lesson because the lesson is unsettled, dull, badly pitched and uncongenial. In these cases, it is important to show the pupil that you have logged the matter and that you have understood how they are feeling. Reiterate that truancy is always unacceptable and confirm that you will follow up the issues raised and, most importantly, get back to them to discuss a way forward.

The next stage involves approaching the member of staff involved to discuss the issues raised by the pupil.

Consider the issues that might be involved in managing this kind of situation.

- The most appropriate person to follow up the issue with the member of staff concerned.
- The most appropriate time and place to do this.
- The feelings of the member of staff concerned. (Few would deny experiencing difficulties with a challenging class or enlivening a notoriously tricky unit of work.)
- An approach that looks for ways forward and identifies support.

A consultant can suggest high-participation approaches and strategies to engage pupils for example, or the head of department may consider overhauling the teaching plans. If a teacher really is struggling to manage classroom behaviour, they are entitled to help and relief.

## When a pupil is known to be truanting

Internal truancy is often discovered by administrative or site staff when others are occupied in classrooms. Some staff who do not work directly in classrooms may feel hesitant about approaching pupils so they need to know if an approach is expected from them or who to call on. Make sure that they understand the routines.

The aim is to minimise the effects of the truancy and minimise the chances of it happening again by addressing the causes.

*The DfES Introductory Training for Support Staff (Behaviour Module) contains some useful activities to share with support staff who may not feel confident in approaching pupils in this situation.*

*([www.teachernet/supplystaff.gov.uk](http://www.teachernet/supplystaff.gov.uk))*

It may be that some areas of the school are found to attract truants. Sharing information on where internal truants are found should lead to a careful examination of these areas, including exploring why pupils seem to prefer to spend their time in these areas, and direct action to resolve these issues, removing access, or addressing any potential health and safety risks.

Once a pupil has been found truanting in school, it helps if there is an agreed process to manage the situation, including:

- what happens next;
- who will pursue matters with the pupil and parents/carers if necessary.



## Activity 2

Invite staff to respond to the following questions. You could use **Resource sheet 2** to support the discussion. Note the differences in replies from different groups of staff. Use the outcome to review and develop the system for managing internal truancy.

- Where does the pupil go/where is the pupil taken?
- What does the pupil do there?
- How is the reason for truanting established?
- Is the reason logged? How? By whom?
- Is the cause of the problem addressed? How? By whom?
- How will the pupil catch up with work?
- How is the pupil reintegrated to this lesson?
- Are pupils guided on what to do if they find themselves in a similar position on another occasion?
- How is internal truancy data analysed and used?
- How do we reduce and prevent this type of truancy?

## Review of current practice

A review of systems designed to target internal truancy will raise awareness of the issues amongst pupil and staff.

The review can be carried out by the senior leadership team but schools have found it most useful to run the following activity with a cross section of all staff.



## Activity 3

1. Highlight the boxes on **Resource sheet 3** that describe systems currently in place. Add others you may find useful.
2. Organise the highlighted systems from most effective to least effective.
3. Discuss why the most effective systems work for you.
4. Discuss how the least effective systems could be improved.
5. Identify new systems that would further reduce internal truancy, and the steps needed to make this happen.



**Resource sheet 4** provides guidance points that schools have found particularly useful. You could use this resource sheet to stimulate discussion with mixed groups of staff.

## Summary

By the end of this unit staff will have:

- a better understanding of the reasons for internal truancy;
- a better knowledge of the range of actions they can take to prevent internal truancy;
- evaluated the effectiveness of current systems for dealing with internal truancy and identified improvements.



## Resource sheet 1

I am late and I will  
be told off in front  
of the class

Lessons  
are boring

Teacher picks  
on me

I get bullied  
in that class

Hiding from staff  
is a great game

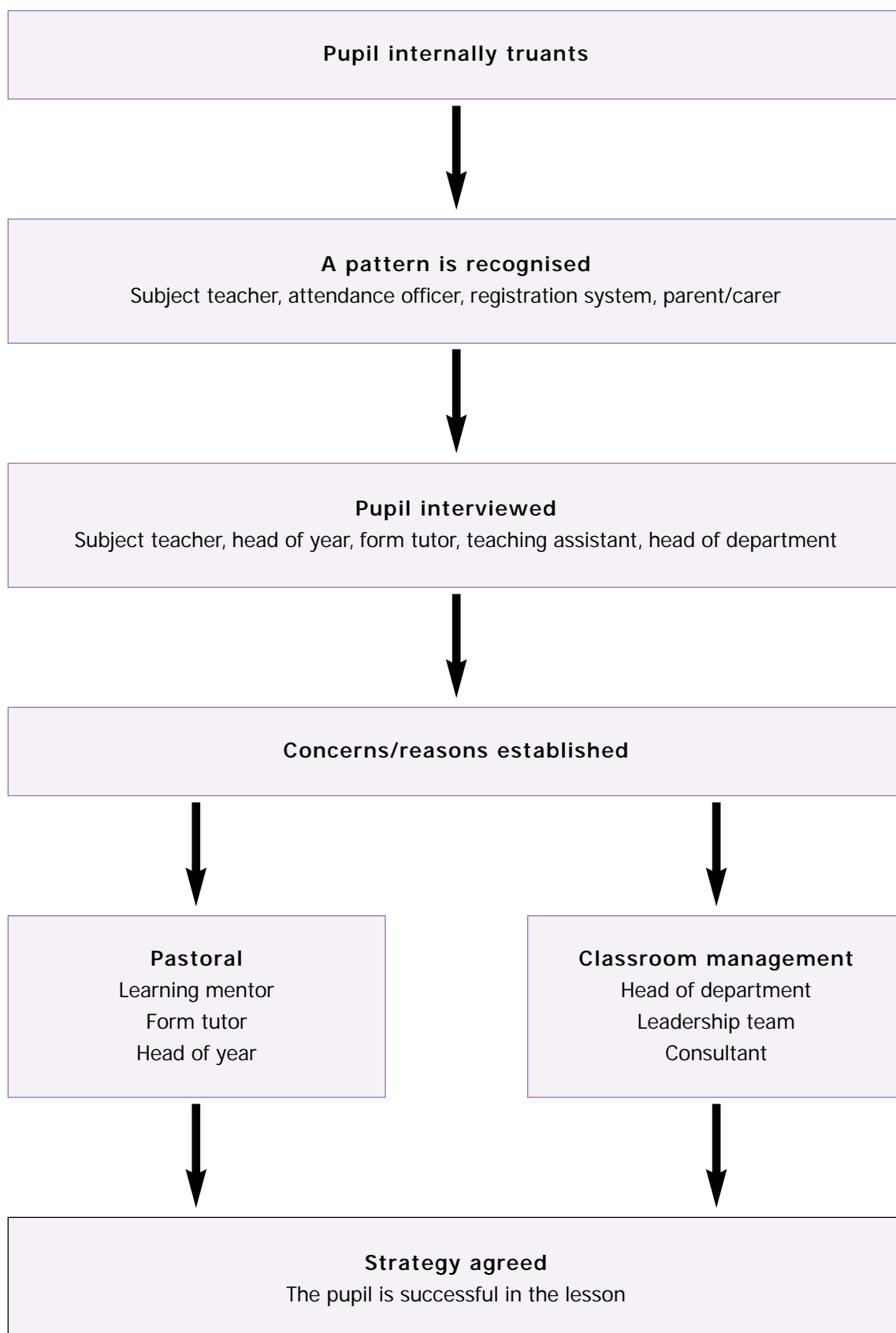
I am behind with  
my work

If I miss the last  
lesson I will be  
first in the queue

My mates do it

It is a supply  
teacher and it  
is always chaos  
in there

## Resource sheet 2



## Resource sheet 3

There is lesson-by-lesson registration.	The system allows teachers to identify pupils marked present in school but absent from lessons.	Designated staff are on duty during lesson times.
The system allows staff to distinguish between pupils sent on an errand and those who are truanting.	All staff are vigilant when meeting pupils out of lessons.	All staff know, after the first 10 minutes of a lesson, which pupils are missing; this is followed through.
Attendance registers for lessons are analysed for trends and patterns.	Staff are informed about the times of day/week when extra vigilance is needed.	Staff are updated regularly about internal truancy and appropriate actions are taken.

## Resource sheet 4

### Guidance points on reducing internal truancy

1. We establish the level of internal truancy and the locations truants use (in and out of school).
2. We assess individual cases, examine reasons for truancy and seek to address the reasons the pupil is avoiding particular sessions.
3. We involve parents early.
4. Tutors, pupils and parents/carers set targets together.
5. We establish and publicise a system of classroom spot checks, using electronic registration systems where possible.
6. We ensure that registers are kept for each lesson (where pupils move to different classes during the day).
7. We use report systems for vulnerable pupils.
8. We patrol the school regularly, especially after morning and afternoon registration and break times.
9. We provide passes to authorise pupils being out of class or school.
10. We identify the hot spots that seem to attract internal truants and seek to remove them.
  - In school, block access to these areas.
  - Outside school, develop links within the community, for example encourage shopkeepers to report truants to the school.
11. We consider whole-school security issues and risk assess.

9 Attendance Unit: 9.6S	
<b>Title</b>	Supporting pupils to catch up with coursework
<b>Level</b>	Ready for more
<b>Audience</b>	Teaching staff, including teaching assistants
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To support schools in identifying good practice and then developing next steps to support pupils in catching up on coursework</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<p>This unit can be used:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>as a discussion focus for the senior leadership team</li> <li>as a discussion focus for departments</li> <li>to support the identification of good practice and plan the dissemination to all departments</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a reduction in the number of pupils who experience a crisis in relation to coursework;</li> <li>improved GCSE results for identified pupils;</li> <li>the extent to which pupils in need of support are identified early;</li> <li>pupil/parent/carers views of the effectiveness of the support systems in place.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Pupil support systems
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	<p>Pupils: Attendance 9.6P Getting additional help with coursework Parents/carers: Attendance 9.6PC Supporting parents/carers to help their child with coursework</p>
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools</i> (Ofsted, 2001)</p> <p><i>The Learning Challenge</i> materials (DfES 0393-2003) Part of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy intervention package for underperforming pupils</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize">www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize</a> BBC Bitesize offers revision materials and coursework advice on 16 subjects</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/communities/onionstreet">www.bbc.co.uk/schools/communities/onionstreet</a> Onion Street chat room offers online support</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/education/asguru">www.bbc.co.uk/education/asguru</a> AS Guru offers help with general studies, English, maths and biology</p>

# Supporting pupils to catch up with coursework

## Introduction

Coursework is a critical part of the Key Stage 4 curriculum and for some pupils it is a key reason for absenteeism. Coursework deadlines can create a great deal of stress for pupils, particularly those who feel that they are struggling to complete work on time and to a satisfactory standard. This is inevitably the case for pupils who are already vulnerable and experiencing barriers to learning.

*Often those pupils whose absence is most frequent do not find learning easy, and their failure to re-integrate and catch up frequently engenders a vicious circle in which frustration leads to more absence...*

*(Improving Behaviour and Attendance in Secondary Schools, Ofsted, 2001)*

These are some key skills that pupils need in order to manage coursework:

- knowledge about which learning style suits them best;
- organisational and study skills;
- confidence to seek help and advice.

When pupils do not already have these skills they will struggle to meet the deadlines set. Falling behind with coursework can mean that pupils find themselves on a downward spiral, getting further and further behind, feeling increasing levels of stress and becoming less likely to seek help and advice.

Effective schools have established good support mechanisms and plan realistic schedules for pupils. This unit provides an opportunity for staff to reflect on current practice and consider to what extent it supports all pupils to meet both coursework demands and attendance targets.





## Activity 1

- **Preferred learning styles**  
Are pupils and staff aware of preferred learning styles, so that activities can be structured to meet different needs?
- **Organisational skills**  
Pupils need to develop a range of skills, including, for example, note-taking, diary planning, revision techniques. How are pupils helped to develop these skills?
- **Confidence in seeking advice**  
Does the classroom ethos allow or encourage pupils to ask for help and advice? Are pupils aware of where to go to get support or advice on issues such as coursework, careers and qualifications?

Analyse how well your school supports pupils with regard to the three issues above. What else could your school do to better support pupils with regard to these three issues?

- What are your most successful approaches?
- How could teaching assistants, learning mentors, Connexions personal advisers and other staff be involved in helping pupils develop and use these skills?
- How could pupil support systems be promoted or developed?



## Activity 2

**Resource sheet 1** illustrates the experience of three pupils in three different schools. Consider the three scenarios on Resource sheet 1 and record how your school systems:

- reduce the likelihood of similar situations occurring;
- allow for early identification of pupils with emerging concerns;
- support pupils so that they catch up and attend school.



## Activity 3

**Resource sheet 2** builds on Resource sheet 1 and is in the form of a checklist using strategies drawn from a number of schools that demonstrate exemplary practice. Scroll down the list of statements on Resource sheet 2 and:

- identify those strategies that are currently in place in your school. Reflect on their effectiveness and make notes of potential developments;
- highlight strategies that could possibly be introduced. What would the implications be for pupils and staff? Would it make a difference? What roles and responsibilities need to be defined?



## Activity 4

Look at **Resource sheet 3** which gives additional strategies for supporting pupils with coursework.

- Which strategies listed could usefully be introduced in your school?

## Summary

By the end of this unit staff will:

- know more about the range of good practice currently being used in the school for supporting pupils with coursework;
- have a better understanding of the implications for them of any new procedures that are to be implemented;
- have a better understanding of how to support pupils who have fallen behind with coursework tasks.

## Resource sheet 1

### Case study

	Suzanne Year 10	Liam Year 11	Yasmin Year 11
<b>The situations</b>	Suzanne missed the lessons dedicated to maths coursework because she was ill. She has been issued with the guidance but no real support. As a consequence she is becoming increasingly anxious because the deadline is looming.	Liam has coped well with all coursework demands except for English and D&T. In dedicated coursework lessons Liam covers up the fact that he has fallen behind by working on single sheets of paper and informs the teachers that the rest of the work is at home. Closer monitoring by the teacher would have resolved this problem before it became a larger issue.	Yasmin has completed all coursework but, when it is reviewed by the teachers, it emerges that the standard does not reflect her ability. Yasmin's parents/carers are unable to offer support and there are no resource texts or a computer at home. Because of family commitments, Yasmin is unable to use the after-school facilities to support research. She becomes increasingly anxious.
<b>Their plans</b>	Suzanne decides to feign illness and then use this as an excuse for not completing the work.	After the completion deadline has passed a routine letter is sent home to Liam's parents requesting to see the work. His parents now know that there is no coursework but trust their son when he says he will catch up.	Because Yasmin believes there is no way she can improve on her coursework and is too proud to confide in her teachers about the situation, she decides to be ill around the time of final submission.
<b>Their actions</b>	Suzanne was absent from school for two weeks.	Liam regularly truanted from English and D&T lessons and would often claim illness and be absent for several days.	Yasmin was absent for three weeks.
<b>The outcomes</b>	Suzanne still hasn't completed the coursework. When the pressure returns she knows she will need to feign illness again.	Liam failed to complete the D&T coursework and was not entered. English entered him and used the few pieces that were completed in Year 10.	Yasmin's first coursework attempts were submitted. Yasmin knows this will seriously impact on her GCSE results.

## Resource sheet 2

### Checklist: supporting pupils with coursework

Strategy	✓X	Examples	Notes
Sufficient time is dedicated to the development of coursework skills in Key Stage 3.		<p><i>Staff and pupils are made aware of the skills required to complete successful coursework, e.g. hypothesis setting, questionnaire design, data gathering, analysis, evaluation. These skills are included in pupils' yearly planners.</i></p> <p><i>Staff make explicit the skills being developed by the task and make reference to the pupil planner.</i></p>	
There is mapping available that shows where and when these skills are taught.		<p><i>All Key Stage 3 subjects identify:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>type of coursework (e.g. investigation, experimental, research, hypothesis testing);</i></li> <li><i>time of year and expected duration;</i></li> <li><i>the key skills being developed.</i></li> </ul>	
Coursework skills are made explicit to pupils.		<i>The curriculum manager maps this information to ensure that all skills are developed, demands on pupils are manageable and all staff are informed.</i>	
The skills are transferred from one curriculum area to another.		<i>Staff are encouraged to acknowledge, consolidate and develop skills addressed in other subjects. For example: 'When you were planning your history coursework the skills you used were ...; I want you to use these same skills in geography to ...'.</i>	
Support is offered to pupils who need additional help in developing these skills.		<i>Pupils in need of additional support are identified and learning support assistants are assigned.</i>	
<p>Data is recorded and disseminated regarding pupils' development of these skills.</p> <p>Information is transferred to Key Stage 4.</p>		<i>Skills of all pupils are recorded to inform Key Stage 4.</i>	
There is a register of pupils who need additional support with coursework when they enter Key Stage 4.		<i>All subjects access the register of pupils who potentially require additional support for coursework. Where possible, a teaching assistant/mentor is assigned to pupils at the appropriate time.</i>	

Strategy	✓X	Examples	Notes
<p>Coursework demands are mapped for all curriculum areas. This includes deadlines.</p> <p>Demands and deadlines are translated to the individual level so that every pupil understands their personal coursework timetable.</p> <p>Individual coursework timetables are scrutinised to ensure that they are realistic in terms of balance and spread of demand.</p>		<p><i>All GCSE coursework requirements including start and completion times are mapped on a planner as part of a feasibility study. Curriculum managers discuss the effectiveness of the plan and adjust it accordingly.</i></p> <p><i>Pupils/parents/carers are issued with a personal timetable of preparation time, deadline dates and potential support.</i></p> <p><i>A parents' evening is dedicated to GCSE coursework to support parents/carers in supporting their children. This is also an opportunity to encourage parents/carers to contact the school if they have concerns.</i></p>	
<p>Pupils are offered support. The support caters for a wide range of needs.</p> <p>Pupils understand how to access the support.</p> <p>The school monitors the number of pupils accessing the support.</p> <p>The support is coordinated on a subject basis. The effectiveness of the support is monitored to ensure that consistent and appropriate support is offered across the curriculum.</p> <p>Vulnerable pupils are offered additional support. The impact is regularly monitored and reviewed.</p>		<p>A high profile campaign ensures that all pupils and parents/carers know where to access support.</p> <p>Support is offered before school, at lunchtimes and after school.</p> <p>Individual pupils are encouraged to attend support sessions.</p> <p>If pupils are currently not attending full-time, e.g. are pregnant or on a reintegration programme, then they are encouraged to complete the coursework at home. Extra written guidance and regular meetings (or phone calls) with a named contact from school supports the process.</p> <p>When each curriculum deadline is met the school acknowledges this by offering an alternative curriculum session, e.g. ice skating.</p>	

## Resource sheet 3

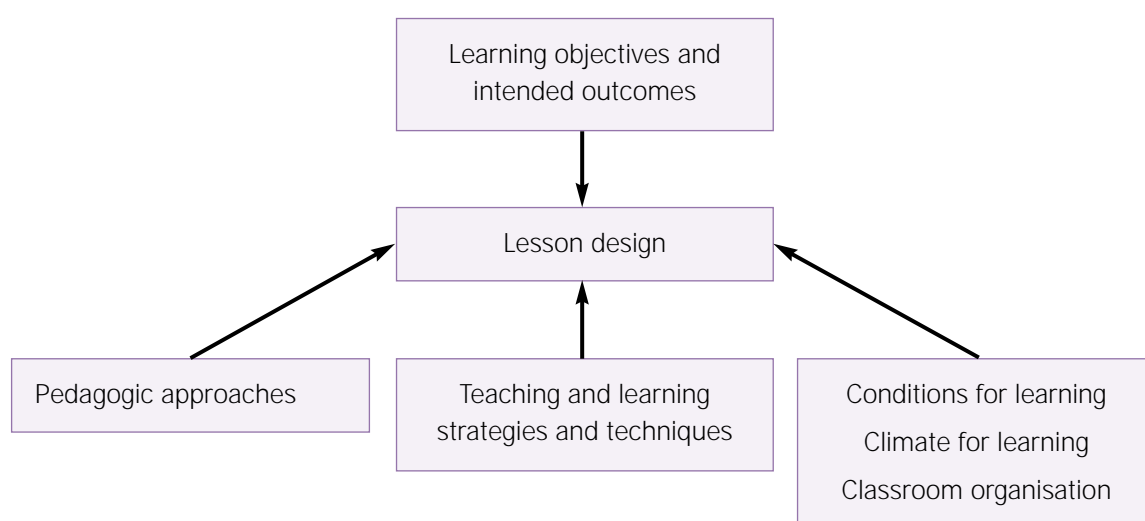
### Checklist: supporting pupils with coursework

- Small projects in Key Stage 3 are mapped for skill development and progression. This can be added to the pupil profile.
- Coursework support classes are run after school on a weekly basis throughout the year. When deadlines are due this is increased to two or three times per week. All staff support this initiative.
- Support classes are run during school holidays/weekends.
- Coursework is managed during the normal timetable using exam-style conditions and a small steps approach.
- Dedicated mentors are assigned to identified pupils to support coursework.
- Teaching assistant support is used for pupils who need additional support.
- All pupils are assigned to a member of staff who takes the role of mentor and supports the management of the coursework.
- Spot checks on all pupils are made via class lists where teachers indicate concerns.
- A parents' evening is dedicated to coursework. This includes details about expectations, support, meeting deadlines, useful resources and how parents/carers can help.
- There is a coursework noticeboard in the staff room giving up-to-date information on current deadlines and any emerging concerns with pupils.
- A postcard is sent home to parents/carers notifying them of the imminent deadline for coursework submission and a contact number if they are concerned.
- Consultation days are used to give additional support to a selected number of pupils.

9 Attendance Unit: 9.7S	
<b>Title</b>	Developing good starters and plenaries to encourage regular attendance and punctuality
<b>Level</b>	Getting started
<b>Audience</b>	Teachers and teaching assistants
<b>Purpose</b>	To support staff to review and develop starters and plenaries to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• promote attendance through starters and plenaries</li> <li>• effectively integrate latecomers</li> <li>• support pupils returning from absence through starter and plenary activities</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	The behaviour and attendance leader with curriculum leaders and departmental staff. The materials can be used as a self-study exercise, paired work with a colleague or a whole departmental focus. The materials can help staff identify: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• existing good practice for wider dissemination;</li> <li>• the areas for development and ideas for new approaches;</li> <li>• action points, capacity and resource implications.</li> </ul> <p><i>Note:</i> changes need to be monitored to ensure that effective practice can be more widely spread.</p>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• speedier starts to lessons;</li> <li>• late arrivals quickly being settled;</li> <li>• a reduction in the number of pupils arriving late.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Bullying Classroom behaviour Curriculum
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	Staff: Ready for more 9.6S Supporting pupils to catch up with coursework
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 1</i> (DfES 0392-2003)</p> <p><i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2</i> (DfES 0055-2004)</p> <p><i>Tackling Truancy Together</i> (DfEE 0084/2001)</p> <p>Truancy Buster Awards 2001: Case Studies (DfES, 2001)</p> <p><i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack (ISBN 1860251765) and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack (ISBN 1873562942) (Both published by The Chalkface Project)</p> <p>Suggestions for activities and worksheets to motivate those at risk of truancy</p> <p><i>Teaching and learning in secondary schools: pilot</i> (DfES 0367-2003)</p> <p>Unit 6: Starters and plenaries</p> <p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance</a> DfES improving attendance website – provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on school attendance</p> <p><a href="http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies">www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies</a> Includes examples of techniques used to raise attendance and reduce truancy</p> <p><a href="http://www.chalkface.com">www.chalkface.com</a> The Chalkface Project</p>

# Developing good starters and plenaries to encourage regular attendance and punctuality

Effective teachers and teaching assistants consider the full range of factors when designing lessons.



(*Teaching and learning in secondary schools*, Unit 1, Lesson design, DfES 0367/2003)

Maximising the engagement of pupils and ensuring that learning outcomes are met are key indicators of a successful lesson. Attendance is often an assumed part of the whole process. Therefore, in terms of lesson design, it is important to consider where there are opportunities to:

- promote regular attendance;
- integrate latecomers;
- support returning pupils.

For example, with regard to promoting regular attendance, any one of the following could be the deciding factor that encourages a pupil to attend your next lesson.

- Objectives are displayed at the beginning of a lesson that are understood by all pupils.
- Intended outcomes are achievable and have a motivational element.
- There is a well thought out seating plan promoting opportunities for peer support.
- Appropriate homework is set within a realistic time frame and accessible by all.

In developing an effective approach to promoting attendance, two key areas to consider are the starters and plenaries. By engaging the class in the first minute with a welcoming atmosphere, combined with an effective routine for integrating latecomers and a plenary that stimulates and reinforces learning, the desire to attend the next lesson will be promoted.





## Activity 1

Work through the list of considerations when planning effective starters and plenaries on **Resource sheet 1**, recording any action points. You could use this task:

- as a self-study tool;
- to promote and share good practice within the department;
- on a one-to-one basis with a buddy.

Remember that any change in approach needs to be sustained to allow revised routines and expectations to become the norm. Logging changes in approaches, pupils' responses and outcomes can aid the process of sharing good practice.

## Summary

By the end of this unit staff will:

- have a better understanding of the link between starter and plenary activities and pupil attendance and punctuality;
- be aware of a range of strategies for effectively integrating latecomers into their lessons;
- understand how starter and plenary sessions can actively support pupils who have just returned to school after a period of absence.



## Resource sheet 1

### 1 How to develop starters to encourage attendance

(A) When pupils arrive are they in a 'ready to learn' state (for example, physically and emotionally comfortable)?

Have you taken account of where they have come from, for example:

- a lesson where lots of energy was spent, e.g. drama, PE;
- an exam;
- break/lunch;
- the other end of the school;

and planned a starter activity to create the most appropriate environment to engage the pupils?

For example, if pupils are arriving in an excitable state then displaying a sequence of photos and asking pupils to think about their relevance before any discussions take place will have a calming effect.

Have you/the department built up a bank of effective generic starter activities/resources that can be easily adapted to meet the needs of each group?

Action points:

(B) Are there clear protocols for pupils arriving late to the lesson? Do pupils understand and follow them? Are they applied consistently and reinforced regularly by:

- you;
- the department;
- the school?

For example, pupils know they walk in quietly and take a seat at the nearest available desk. Learning objectives are displayed which offer the pupil opportunity to clarify what is happening in the lesson. The issue of lateness is dealt with later in the lesson, at an appropriate time.

*'Let's begin the whiteboard game. Remember that if someone arrives late they won't disturb us and I will deal with it later.'*

## Resource sheet 1 page 2 of 5

Action points:

(C) Are pupils exposed to a variety of starter activities and have they learned the routines to ensure maximum engagement?

For example, the usual routine for questions when using whiteboards, i.e. 'think–write–show' is very different from the routine for group discussions, for example 'think time–discuss with a friend–discuss with another pair–feed back'.

When a new style of starter is introduced for the first time it may not go smoothly because pupils need time to understand the new routine and familiarise themselves with your expectations. They will require time to practice. This needs to be explained to pupils and appropriate support provided.

Action points:

(D) Is any positive reference made to attendance or punctuality?

For example:

*'Well done for getting here on time and settling quickly.'*

*'Well done, for completing your assignments. The attendance of this group is very high, and it makes a tremendous difference to the quality of your work.'*

- How often is this reference made? Is it part of the normal routine for:
  - you;
  - the department;
  - the school?
- Is regular attendance at lessons acknowledged/rewarded or is it assumed?
- Is the link between attendance and attainment made explicit?
- Do all pupils strive to attend your lessons?
- Does the routine need to be reviewed?

Action points:

(E) At the beginning of the lesson, are opportunities given to reinforce the importance of attending?

For example:

*'It is unfortunate that Sean is absent today. We will need to support him next lesson to ensure he catches up. We will decide the 'buddy' for Sean during the plenary. A day's absence can really make it hard to keep up.'*

- Is attendance valued by all?
- Are there systems in place to allow pupils to catch up on work if they have unfortunately missed some of your lessons?

Action points:

(F) Does the start of the lesson allow returning pupils to feel included?

For example:

*'This is the second of six lessons in this unit of work. I want you all to discuss and decide in pairs what you think the key messages are from last lesson. This will help Simone and Dajinder catch up.'*

*Now share your thoughts with another pair before I take feedback.'*

When a pupil returns after an absence how are they made to feel welcome and included by you and the group? What support is available if the pupil is returning after an incident of bullying by one of the group? (See Section 4: Bullying – Staff: Understanding and supporting pupils who are bullied.)

Is there an appropriate seating plan to ensure that the returning pupil has every opportunity to be fully integrated in the lesson from the start?

**Resource sheet 1** page 4 of 5

Action points:

## 2) How to develop plenaries to encourage attendance

Consider the following.

(A) Is sufficient time dedicated to the delivery of a well planned plenary to enable:

- a review of lesson objectives – taking stock of what has been covered in a task or sequence and relating this to the importance of attending;
- recognition of the achievements of individuals and the class which will promote pupil self-esteem and encourage attendance;
- stimulation of interest, curiosity and anticipation about the next phase of learning to create a need to attend;
- pupils to go to their next lesson feeling successful and supported?

For example:

*'You have all made tremendous progress today. Remember this was the second of a series of six lessons on this topic. On Thursday we will be exploring this issue further. You will be working in pairs on an aspect of your choice so it is important that you all attend.'*

- Do pupils leave the lesson feeling a sense of achievement and a desire to return and learn more? How do you know?
- Does the attendance fluctuate in relation to the type of work/teaching style? For example when group work is organised for a series of lessons does attendance fluctuate or remain static?

Action points:

- (B) Are individual personalities/group dynamics and needs considered during the plenary?  
For some pupils simple statements can become the key tools to attendance.

For example:

- feeling safe – *'Because you worked so well in groups today we will use the same groupings tomorrow'*
- feeling valued – *'We have all really enjoyed the lesson and made enormous progress. I am really looking forward to the next lesson with this group. Well done to Howard for his informed contribution to the plenary'*
- high profile – *'The next three lessons are really important because ...'*
- being informed – *'Next lesson we are going to ...'*
- feeling important – *'So that we can explore this further in our next lesson I have asked Jabinder, Thomas and Louisa to find more information on ...'*
- being needed – *'We are now so close to completing this work, all we need is a really good input from you during the next lesson'*

Have you identified pupils whose attendance is fragile?

What strategies/support are offered at the end of the lesson to encourage and almost guarantee attendance at the next lesson. Do these strategies work? How have they been shared with other colleagues?

Action points:





9 Attendance Unit: 9.8S	
<b>Title</b>	Developing relationships with pupils who are regular non-attenders
<b>Category</b>	Developing good practice
<b>Audience</b>	Staff
<b>Purpose</b>	<p>This resource will support schools in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>raising staff awareness of the importance of developing positive relationships with non-attenders</li> <li>developing strategies to promote positive relationships between pupils and staff</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<p>The behaviour and attendance leader supported by pastoral and curriculum leaders can use the material with mixed groups of staff to support them in developing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>positive relationships with pupils who are regular non-attenders</li> <li>self-study material for staff</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improvement in the attendance of regular non-attenders;</li> <li>pupils surveyed expressing a positive attitude to staff.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	<p>Pupil support systems</p> <p>Everyday policies: rewards, sanctions and the promotion of positive behaviour</p> <p>Bullying</p>
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	<p>Staff: Developing good practice</p> <p>9.2S Developing systems to celebrate regular attendance and punctuality throughout the day</p>
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/DfES">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance/DfES</a> Improving attendance website – provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on attendance.</p> <p><a href="http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies/">www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies/</a> Includes examples of techniques used to raise attendance and reduce truancy.</p> <p>The Chalkface Project (<a href="http://www.chalkface.com">www.chalkface.com</a>) <i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack. Suggestions for activities and worksheets to promote attendance.</p>

# Developing relationships with pupils who are regular non-attenders

## Introduction

Regular non-attenders have made the decision again and again that staying away is better for them than coming in to school. Some of them follow a cycle of disinclination, heightened negative emotions, and then allow circumstances to help them: an empty house, a sunny day, a friend who also truant. Others are propelled by regular demotivation: a particular lesson; coursework that has not been completed; people to be avoided.

The art of winning back persistent non-attenders means breaking the cycle by addressing the underlying problem. Cast a new light on the problem by thinking of it as removing barriers to attendance. The pupil who is stuck in a dispiriting struggle with a subject that is too difficult may need a new set or a new subject. The pupil who gets more from daytime TV than GCSE media studies may have more enthusiasm for the subject than they realised.

Consider how your school systems and community links can break into a cycle of non-attendance. How do they facilitate and maintain contact with pupils who are not often in school?

## Causes of truancy

In their research on absence from school, Heather Malcolm, Valerie Wilson, Julia Davidson and Susan Kirk reported the following causes of truancy as suggested by pupils, parents, LEAs and teachers.

**Secondary pupils'** reasons for absence focused on school rather than home and included boredom, problems with lessons and teachers, anticipation of trouble, frustration at school rules, the size and complexity of secondary schools and fear of returning after a long absence. Bullying, having no friends and peer pressure to 'bunk off' were also mentioned. Some pupils mentioned home-related factors such as distress when parents split up, and a few noted personal factors such as laziness and the habit of poor attendance.

**Parents** perceived the main cause of truancy to be bullying, problems with teachers and peer pressure to stay away from school.

**LEAs and teachers** suggested a wide range of causes of truancy. Most mentioned home factors, which included parents putting a low value on education, disorganised lifestyles and inadequate parenting ... school factors were an important cause of absence. These included inappropriate curriculum, teaching, school attitudes, racial harassment, bullying and peer pressure. In addition, secondary school teachers noted the influence of personal factors such as low pupil self-esteem and embarrassment at perceived inadequacies.

(DfES Research Report No 424 *Absence from School: A study of its causes and effects in seven LEAs*, Heather Malcolm, Valerie Wilson, Julia Davidson and Susan Kirk. The SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow. May 2003)

## Developing relationships

The research above highlights that an important factor in improving the attendance of regular non-attenders is to ensure that pupils develop positive relationships with staff, and peers. These may include, for example, form tutors, learning mentors, certain subject teachers, teaching assistants, supervisors, Educational Welfare Officers, friends and family. Knowing that there are people around who look out for you, literally and metaphorically, can be an incentive to attend.

Setting targets with clear expectations and brief update conversations will be enough to shift some pupils back into the normal routine. For others it will take time to build trust and confidence.

You could use the following activity to explore these issues.



### Activity 1

Imagine you are a pupil who attends school for just one or two days a week and on some occasions you are absent for a full week.

Behind your absences lie:

- an exhausting home life with younger siblings and a single parent who is struggling to work part-time;
- long-standing problems with literacy which cause you problems in all lessons where reading and writing is concerned;
- a deep disinclination for history and RE where the demands on reading and writing seem excessive and you feel left out and a failure.

It is Tuesday morning and because the school is pressurising your parent, you decide to attend for the whole day. There are six 50-minute lessons, one 20-minute break and one 40-minute lunch period to get through before you can go home.

1. Record some of the feelings and needs that might emerge throughout the day starting with leaving home. Discuss these in your group.
2. Now take each of the negative feelings and note the opposite positive feeling that you would like to have. For each need you have identified, suggest one way this need might be met.

Identify the roles individuals at school and at home could play in developing and supporting these positive feelings and meeting individual needs.

Now step back out of the pupil role. Use **Resource sheet 1** to help focus your discussion on how the school can support regular non-attending pupils to feel better about attending school. Use the middle column to detail what the school can do to help pupil feeling shift closer to those in the right-hand column

What is the role of **relationships** in this process? Through discussion, clarify roles, communication routes and monitoring systems to ensure that all pupils have the opportunity to develop positive relationships in school.

Consider who (from the full range of staff) might be the best person to develop relationships with individual regular non-attenders at the school currently? Explain and justify your choices. Discuss how this person might be supported in their role.

Use **Resource sheet 1** to support the task

Regular non-attenders are more likely to attend if staff:

- welcome them, show they care;
- show that their attendance is valued;
- listen to them, and sometimes make time just for that;
- acknowledge the issues;
- are explicit about progress made;
- ensure that tasks make sense;
- offer hope;
- arrange specific help;
- keep promises;
- remark on success;
- communicate with others who support the pupil;
- show empathy with their feelings and circumstances;
- distinguish between the value of the person and their negative behaviour.

Key actions include:

- identifying a key worker to coordinate and act as gateway for information about regular non-attenders;
- having in place a simple system for picking up absences and responding immediately;
- identifying key staff who have reasonably good relationships with the pupil and supporting them to build a network of people who look out for him or her;
- being sure there is time to listen to the pupil and remove the barriers to attendance;
- early action to improve the pupils' experience of school, so that they feel that improvements can be made.



## Activity 2

Plan how the school can incorporate the points above into their practice to help improve relationships with regular non-attenders.

You could use **Resource sheet 2** as a starting point for discussion. Link the needs of vulnerable pupils to the actions. Who might do what, when and how?

## Summary

By the end of this unit staff will:

- understand the importance of developing positive relationships with non-attending pupils;
- know a range of strategies that can be employed to build positive relationships with non-attending pupils.

## Resource sheet 1

### Developing relationships with pupils who are regular non-attenders

When I attend school this is how it is for me	What the school can do to develop positive relationships 	When I attend school this is how it is for me
I feel left out, excluded		I am included
I don't belong, feel isolated		I am involved
I don't know what's going on, feel anxious		I know what's going on, feel confident
I can't keep up, feel stupid, worried		I'm coping well and making progress, feel successful
I can't trust anyone, feel afraid		There are staff and pupils I can trust
I get shouted at for not coming, feel angry		Staff show me respect
I feel alone		I have friends in school, feel popular

# Resource sheet 1 page 2 of 2

When I attend school this is how it is for me	What the school can do to develop positive relationships 	When I attend school this is how it is for me
I feel vulnerable		I am growing in confidence
No one likes me		I am needed
It never changes here, I feel bored		There is so much to do in school
I get picked on		I know who I can turn to for help
Nobody cares		Staff really care about me
Nobody understands me		Some staff really understand me
What's the point? I feel hopeless		I can see why it is important to attend, feel optimistic

## Resource sheet 2

### Actions

Welcome pupils

Provide listening time

Arrange help with work

Acknowledge success

Acknowledge the issues

Show empathy

Communicate with others who support the pupil

Offer hope

Separate the person from the behaviour

Show attendance is valued

Make it clear what progress has been made

### Needs

To have friends

To feel included

To know what is going on

To know when I am making progress

To feel successful

To be able to trust others

To feel involved

To be shown respect





9 Attendance Unit: 9.9S	
<b>Title</b>	Supporting vulnerable pupils and those who are reluctant to attend
<b>Level</b>	Ready for more
<b>Audience</b>	Staff
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop support for identified pupils experiencing attendance difficulties</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<p>This unit can be used to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>support review of early identification and support for vulnerable pupils</li> <li>raise staff awareness of underlying causes of absenteeism</li> <li>improve staff awareness/skills in supporting identified pupils</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>increase in overall staff support for identified pupils;</li> <li>improved attendance of identified pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	<p>Pupil support systems</p> <p>Links with partners and other agents</p>
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	<p>Pupils: Developing good practice</p> <p>9.2P Getting help with attendance or punctuality problems</p>
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance</a>  DfES improving attendance website – provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on school attendance</p> <p><a href="http://www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies">www.teachernet.gov.uk/casestudies</a>  Includes examples of techniques used to raise attendance and reduce truancy</p> <p><a href="http://www.chalkface.com">www.chalkface.com</a>  The Chalkface Project</p> <p><a href="http://www.connexions.gov.uk">www.connexions.gov.uk</a></p> <p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters">www.dfes.gov.uk/everychildmatters</a></p>

# Supporting vulnerable pupils and those who are reluctant to attend

## Introduction

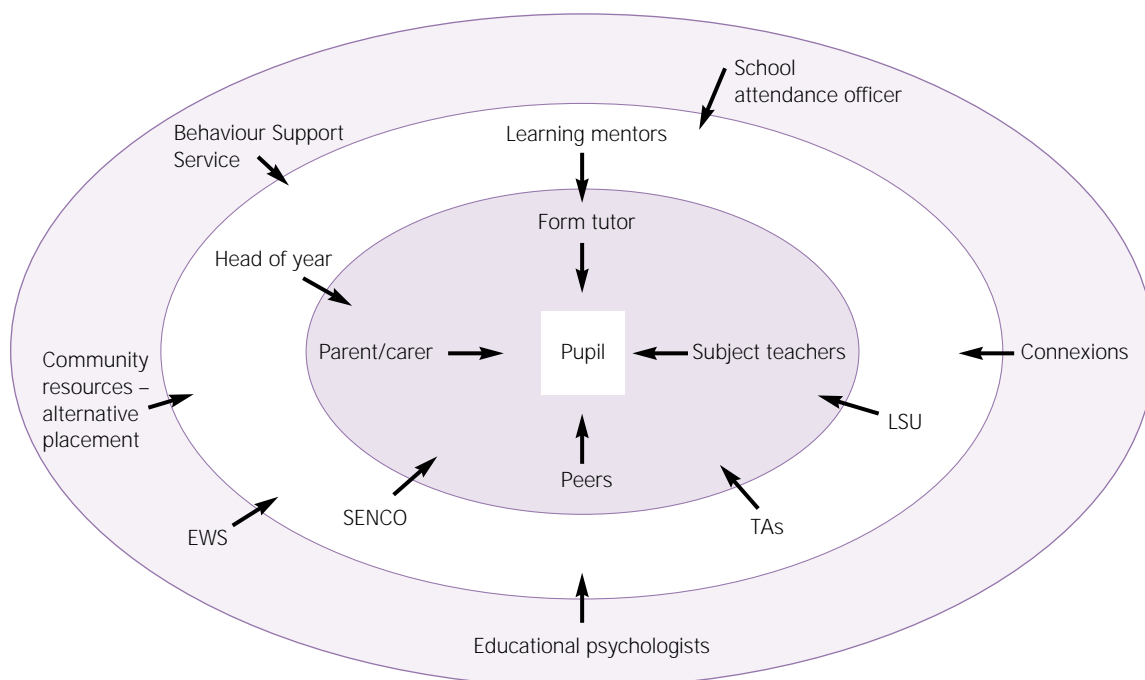
Every member of the school community has a part to play in securing full attendance. First and foremost, they create a climate in which all pupils are welcomed, feel safe and are supported when they attend school.

Look at the diagram below. For most pupils, the routine support offered in the inner zone (i.e. by form tutor, parent/carer, peers and subject teachers) is enough to maintain their commitment and attendance. Other pupils may need additional support from the people in the middle zone, in order to feel fully valued and committed. The school can provide much of this support internally by appropriately deploying staff, for example mentors and tutors. However, some pupils require support from the outer zone, from professionals who are dedicated to giving organised time and services to their particular case.

All interventions aim to make attendance the best option for the pupil, and to help them deal with the problems that lead to truancy. Inconsistent or insensitive intervention can sometimes in itself lead to truancy. Schools that successfully support pupils requiring additional support have developed well coordinated multi-agency support and working. Good practice examples can be found on [www.dfes.gov.uk/best/casestudies](http://www.dfes.gov.uk/best/casestudies)

*Every Child Matters* also emphasises the importance of effective working between school staff and other services and agencies in supporting the most vulnerable pupils:

*There is a strong case for basing multi-disciplinary teams in and around the places where many children spend much of their time, such as schools ... this would promote self-referral and enable children's social workers and other professionals to engage in dialogue with teaching and school support staff.*





## Activity 1

This activity could be completed by a cross-section of school staff together with representatives from agencies and services supporting the school.

Using the diagram above to help, identify the routine, additional and specialist support that is currently on offer in your school for vulnerable pupils.

Who are the providers of support in zones 1, 2 and 3?

Clarify the range of support available from each of these sources.

*In addition to these systems staff in approximately half the schools reported that special arrangements were in place to support and reintegrate poor attenders on their return. They included:*

- *the availability of learning mentors*
- *social inclusion or equivalent units staffed variously by teachers, learning mentors, Connexions staff, pastoral staff and counsellors*
- *adapted or negotiated timetables*
- *school-developed work packs*
- *group work for poor attenders, including sessions for anger management, boosting self-esteem and bereavement counselling*
- *attendance clinics aiming to understand the cause of pupils' absence and encourage attendance; and*
- *sports leadership projects for Year 9 pupils to boost self-esteem*
- *one-to-one counselling*
- *clubs, such as the Attendance Club which brought together poor and good attenders*
- *other 'buddying' and befriending schemes whereby older pupils mentored young poor attenders; and*
- *arrangements for staff to collect children and bring them to school if their parents/carers could not.*

(*Absence from School*, Heather Malcolm, Valerie Wilson, Julia Davidson and Susan Kirk, The SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow, 2003)

Now identify ten pupils from your own school who are vulnerable or may be reluctant to attend. For each pupil, explore how they were identified and clarify their needs.

Next, identify the type of support they would most benefit from. Decide who might provide this support and how might you evaluate its impact.

Use information gathered in this activity to plan support programmes for individual pupils or to review school systems, structures and links with outside agencies.

## Watching attendance

Schools that closely monitor patterns of attendance through efficient and frequent data collection and analysis are able to respond quickly and effectively to emerging problems or concerns.

It is not unusual to find that attendance dips:

- in the last lesson of the day;
- late in term;
- towards the end of the week;
- in particular subjects or with particular teachers;
- on Fridays;
- in early summer;
- for particular pupils with poor attendance records;
- following fixed-term exclusions.



### Activity 2

- Discuss the factors that lie behind these common dips in attendance.
- Identify whether these factors lie mainly within or outside the school.
- Discuss how the support provided in school can address both sets of factors and identify any gaps in provision.

Much harder to spot are:

- pupils whose truancy is erratic;
- emergent truants;
- pupils who use sophisticated methods to truant.



### Activity 3

Work with staff in looking at your attendance monitoring system.

- Would it pick up the eight common patterns listed above?
- Could it be enhanced to include the three issues that are harder to spot?

## Reasons for low attendance

There are many and varied reasons why pupils truant, including:

- being bullied;
- having long-standing fears and feelings about school;
- having had a recent demoralising confrontation with a teacher;
- having had a recent demoralising confrontation with a pupil;
- feelings of worthlessness, exclusion, depression;
- belief that school can't help them;
- stress related to coursework, homework, tests and demanding topics;
- friendships with other truants;
- gang culture;
- stress at home;
- physical distress – the result of late nights, alcohol or drugs;

- believing that the alternatives are more fun;
- illegal employment;
- an extended period of boredom at school;
- a poor relationship with a particular teacher;
- a lesson which is unbearably and predictably boring;
- general poor health;
- caring for ill relatives or younger siblings.

### Case study: Aysha

A science teacher has expressed concerns about Aysha. She often turns up late and doesn't participate in lessons. She is sometimes distracted or apathetic. Recently she has started skipping lessons. Aysha is marked as present in the form register.

The D&T technician has now notified a head of year about a Year 9 pupil hanging around the PE areas on the last two Thursday afternoons. It turns out to be Aysha. Thursday is double science in her class.

Aysha finally reveals to her form tutor that she has been avoiding science as she does not feel comfortable with the teacher. The teacher frequently shouts, which makes Aysha nervous, as it reminds her of her dad, who shouts a lot and can be violent. She has been too afraid to ask for help so has slipped behind with work. Truancy was easier than going to the lesson.



### Activity 4

Conduct your own investigations into the reasons why pupils might be truanting in your school. Survey a range of staff, pupils, parents/carers for their opinions. Use a skilled practitioner to interview some of your vulnerable pupils to explore these issues in more depth.

You could use the case study about Aysha as a stimulus for staff discussion.



### Activity 5

Use a case study approach to discuss your successes in getting some of your most vulnerable pupils back into school. You could consider the following issues.

- What were the most effective strategies?
- Who were the personnel involved?
- What were the triggers for outside agency involvement? Did that intervention work?
- Did this work impact on other areas in school?
- Were there any lessons to be learned from mistakes made?

Use information gained from this activity to draft some guidance for staff and other agencies on supporting vulnerable pupils in your school.



## Activity 6

Look at **Resource sheet 1**, which can be used as a poster to:

- remind staff of some of the problems some pupils experience;
- act as a prop for discussion;
- identify roles and responsibilities for staff in dealing with particular concerns and what skills they might need.

Discuss how you might adapt the poster for use in your school.

## Supporting reintegration

When pupils return to school after a short- or long-term absence, it is helpful to be pro-active in maintaining their commitment to attend, so that the cycle of truancy doesn't restart. There are some things which definitely don't help, such as:

- having to copy up reams of missed notes;
- being plunged back into topics they can't follow because they missed the early work (particularly as some will not be confident learners);
- heavy-handed surveillance procedures;
- being on the receiving end of a throw-away comment from a member of staff.

The pupil who has already voted with their feet is likely to slip deeper into the kind of disenchantment that gave rise to truancy in the first place.



## Activity 7

- What practical steps can be taken to minimise the risks listed above?
- What roles could be undertaken by different staff to support this process?
- What skills would staff need?



## Activity 8

Use **Resource sheet 2** to map out the process the school uses to reintegrate a pupil from:

- short-term absence;
- long-term absence;
- fixed-term exclusion;
- exclusion from another school.

Photocopy and use highlighters to track the process.

- Are the appropriate staff informed?
- Are staff given appropriate information?
- Are staff proactive in supporting these pupils?
- What is the impact of the systems and strategies used?

Note any actions.

## Summary

By the end of this unit staff will:

- have discussed the range of factors that contribute to pupil non-attendance;
- be more aware of the range of support that the school can provide for reluctant attenders;
- be able to use a number of strategies for supporting vulnerable pupils when they re-enter school.





**Meeting family**

Visiting Dad in prison  
Can't read properly

Missed the bus

**Too far!**

That time of the month

**Being bullied**

*I'm too fat*

**Bored**

Do you know why Simone  
is not in school today?

*Mum needs me at home*

*Afraid of teacher*

*Hate maths*

**Going shopping**



*It's my birthday!*

**Can't do the homework**

At the dentist

I've got no school shoes

*Can't keep up*

*Looking after Grandad*

## Resource sheet 2

### Pupil reintegration tracker

Pupil returning from:	Who is informed? Who has lead responsibility?	Extent of information	Strategies to support pupil	Post-reintegration
Short-term absence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Senior leadership team</li> <li>• SENCO</li> <li>• Form tutor</li> <li>• Pastoral head</li> <li>• Head of year/ house</li> <li>• Subject teachers</li> <li>• Heads of department</li> <li>• Behaviour and attendance leader</li> <li>• Education Welfare Officer</li> <li>• Mentors</li> <li>• Peers</li> <li>• All teaching staff</li> <li>• Non-teaching staff</li> <li>• Learning support assistants</li> <li>• Pupils</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An awareness of the pupil returning, i.e. date/time</li> <li>• Reason for absence</li> <li>• Education during absence</li> <li>• Family details</li> <li>• Support prior to reintegration, e.g. services involved</li> <li>• Medical condition</li> <li>• Child protection issues</li> <li>• Details of school support arranged for the pupil</li> <li>• Briefing on the pupil's feelings about returning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive feedback – praise, encouragement, rewards</li> <li>• Staggered reintegration, e.g. reduced week/timetable</li> <li>• No support required</li> <li>• A welcome response from staff</li> <li>• Parental/carer involvement, e.g. daily telephone call</li> <li>• Learning mentor assigned for a fixed period</li> <li>• Support from multidisciplinary team</li> <li>• Out-of-class support at break/lunchtimes</li> <li>• Assigned a peer mentor/buddy</li> <li>• Needs analysis regularly reviewed</li> <li>• Curriculum catch-up materials readily available</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Plan and review meetings arranged for supporting parties, e.g. parents/carers/, EWO, EP, form tutor</li> <li>• Placement in LSU or equivalent unit (staffed variously by teachers, mentors, teaching assistants, counsellors, pastoral staff)</li> <li>• Adapted or negotiated time tables</li> <li>• Group work (anger management, bereavement counselling, social or study skills)</li> <li>• Special projects (sports leadership)</li> <li>• Establish appropriate level of monitoring</li> <li>• Update parents/carers and other services</li> <li>• Acknowledge success of pupils, staff, parents/carers in supporting the pupil through the process</li> <li>• Review reintegration strategies in preparation for the next pupil in this situation</li> </ul>
Long-term absence				
Fixed-term exclusion				
Exclusion from another school				