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9 Attendance Unit: 9.1P	
<b>Title</b>	Using data with pupils to encourage regular attendance and punctuality
<b>Level</b>	Getting started
<b>Audience</b>	Pupils
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop pupils' understanding of attendance data</li> <li>To help pupils understand the impact poor levels of attendance and punctuality can have on attainment</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Heads of year and form tutors to discuss with pupils in assembly and form tutor time</li> <li>Attendance officers/Education Welfare Officers to use when working with individual pupils</li> <li>Displaying the poster prominently as a reminder to all pupils</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved attendance rates and punctuality to lessons for targeted groups;</li> <li>raised awareness by pupils of the impact of poor attendance on attainment (this could be measured via a survey of a random sample of pupils).</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Everyday policies
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	Staff: Getting started 9.1S Developing and managing effective data collection systems Parents/carers: Developing good practice 9.1PC Using data with parents/carers to encourage regular attendance and punctuality
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	Heather Malcolm, Valerie Wilson, Julia Davidson and Susan Kirk <i>Absence from School: A study of its causes and effects in seven LEAs</i> The SCRE Centre, University of Glasgow (DfES Research Report no. 424)  <i>Tackling Truancy Together</i> Truancy Buster Awards 2001: Case Studies (DfES, 2001)  <i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack Suggestions for activities and worksheets to motivate those at risk of truancy  <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  <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  <a href="http://www.chalkface.com">www.chalkface.com</a> The Chalkface Project

## Using data with pupils to encourage regular attendance and punctuality

Analysing attendance data to identify trends and inform actions is an important activity undertaken by schools. Effective schools regularly give feedback to staff and pupils and set targets accompanied by appropriate support strategies. Staff are informed and guided by the information.

This unit provides materials that will help to increase pupils' understanding of attendance data and raise their awareness of the impact of poor attendance on progress and attainment.

Many pupils believe that a 90% attendance rate is an excellent achievement. Once their reasoning is explored it becomes apparent that this percentage is associated with exam performance. For example, Robert couldn't understand why his teachers kept telling him to improve his attendance when on his reports the 86% attendance rate was his highest score!

**Resource sheet 1** is a poster to support pupils' understanding of the impact of a 90% attendance rate. Similar posters can be produced for other attendance percentages. If displayed round the school, used as part of a discussion in form tutor time or as the theme for an assembly, posters can be an important awareness-raising tool.

Once pupils fully appreciate attendance figures, it opens up the opportunity for a more successful approach to personal, group and cohort targets. When percentages are translated into days lost, the relationship between attendance for learning and academic success becomes explicit.

A similar exercise can take place with time lost from learning as a result of poor punctuality.

With the growth of flexible curricula and opportunities for disapplication, many schools have pupils who are also attending other establishments through, for example, work placements, training at college, work-based learning, etc. It is important that pupils realise that attendance at alternative venues and activities is equally important as attendance to school.

Attendance data therefore need to reflect commitment to consistent attendance and punctuality, not just in school but for external obligations too. You might consider making this part of a facilitated discussion, particularly with Year 9 pupils – they could be encouraged to discuss the following.

Discussion point	Issues
Some pupils are allowed to attend school part-time and attend other places for the rest of the time. How does this show itself in attendance data?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The school needs to share data with the other places.</li> <li>• It is difficult for pupils to cope with the varying expectations between school and the other places.</li> </ul>
Why is it important to be on time for school and other related activities, e.g. work placements?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attendance data might be used on references for college or work.</li> <li>• Key information can be missed.</li> <li>• Pupils develop a reputation for tardiness.</li> <li>• A work placement might be withdrawn.</li> <li>• Pupils might miss out on social time with friends.</li> </ul>
Why do some pupils fail to attend school or other activities?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Buses are always late.</li> <li>• Pupils are getting bullied.</li> <li>• Pupils are afraid to ask for help with work, including writing and spelling.</li> <li>• There is no encouragement to get up on time.</li> <li>• Pupils have to take care of another member of the family.</li> </ul>

You might also want to discuss the following research findings with pupils to stimulate a discussion about the causes of absence. How would they frame a similar summary for their school?

*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.*

*(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, DfES Research Report, no. 424)*

It is important that the discussions move towards finding solutions for any problems that arise, for example, by agreeing who the best person to approach in school might be, or what peer support systems are available in school. In finding these solutions, pupils and staff may want to consider moving on to related sections of the toolkit.

Commenting on regular attendance and punctuality throughout the day is a further way of acknowledging good attendance, as well as supporting pupils in achieving agreed attendance targets.

## Summary

By the end of this unit pupils will:

- know more about how the school collects data on attendance and how it uses this data;
- have a greater awareness of why the school collects data in the first place;
- have a better understanding of the impact of poor levels of attendance and punctuality on attainment.

Simon is in Year 8. His attendance rate is always around 90%.

He thinks this is pretty good!

Mon	Tue	Wed	Thur	Fri

↑  
Absent half a day every week

90% attendance means that he is absent from lessons for the equivalent of **one half-day every week**

In Year 7, Simon's 90% attendance rate means that he missed the equivalent of **four whole weeks** of lessons in the school year

Sept ←————→ July

--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--	--

↑  
Absent for four weeks

If Simon continues to attend for only 90% of the time, then over five years he will **miss** the equivalent of about **one-half of a school year**

Sept ←————→ July

Y7									
Y8									
Y9		Half a year absent from school							
Y10									
Y11									

Do you think a 90% attendance rate will affect Simon's chances of doing well in school?

Is your attendance rate affecting your performance in school?





9 Attendance Unit: 9.2P	
<b>Title</b>	Getting help with attendance or punctuality problems
<b>Level</b>	Developing good practice
<b>Audience</b>	Pupils
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To begin to examine underlying problems of poor attendance and punctuality</li> <li>To give schools the opportunity to review current practice and reflect on effective strategies currently in use in other schools</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The behaviour and attendance leader can use this unit to liaise with the pastoral team and pupil council to plan communication of key messages to all pupils</li> <li>The school staff can use this unit to review existing strategies for supporting pupils with attendance or punctuality problems</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved attendance rates for identified pupils;</li> <li>more identified pupils seeking and responding to support rather than opting for truancy.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Pupil support systems Bullying
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	Parents/carers: Developing good practice 9.2PC Helping parents/carers to work in partnership with the school to solve attendance problems Staff: Ready for more 9.9S Supporting vulnerable pupils and those who are reluctant to attend
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Tools for Improving Attendance</i> pack (ISBN 1860251765) and <i>Overcoming Truancy</i> pack (ISBN 1873562942)</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>            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.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship">www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship</a>            Citizenship at Key Stage 3, Unit 17: School linking</p>

# Getting help with attendance or punctuality problems

## Introduction

When a school's attendance system is well-structured and implemented consistently there is:

- heightened awareness by the whole-school community of the importance placed on good attendance and punctuality;
- celebration of good and improved performance;
- investigation of absenteeism;
- discouraging of poor punctuality by a clearly defined sanctions policy;
- support for pupils to improve attendance and punctuality.

Poor attendance and punctuality may be symptoms of an underlying problem. If this is the case, then the underlying cause should become the focus for support. Effective schools use a range of strategies to encourage pupils to seek support and ensure that they know how to access it.

Materials in this unit should therefore be available for work with pupils to:

- encourage them to seek support;
- ensure they know how to access it.

This unit contains:

- a table to support a review of current practice in your school;
- three examples of successful strategies.



## Activity 1

Consider the statements on **Resource sheet 1a** and, through discussions with colleagues, identify:

- specific examples of when and how this approach/strategy is used in your school;
- what difference it makes;
- whether changes or improvements are required.

Use the action point column to note ideas and outcomes from the discussion.

A blank form has been provided (**Resource sheet 1b**) so that this exercise can be completed with a peer mentor, pupil councillor or other appropriate pupil representatives.



## Activity 2

Look at the draft poster (**Resource sheet 2a**) promoting attendance issues, in particular pupil support, and consider how you might use a similar idea in your own school.

Ideas might include:

- an activity for a pupil committee;
- an activity for form tutor time to tie in with a promotion in assembly;
- a competition with prizes open to all Key Stage 3 pupils;
- a focus for a discussion on problems and solutions relating to late arrival.

The poster in itself will need to be contextualised by coordinating it with activities in other units.

Now look at the 'business card' (**Resource sheet 2b**) and consider any ways in which this idea could be adapted for use in your own school. A pupil group such as a school council, for example, may wish to consider it, including ways of promoting and distributing the card.

Ideas might include:

- sending the card to parents/carers with a standard letter;
- displaying it in local community areas, e.g. a dentist's waiting room, a doctor's surgery, supermarkets, etc.;
- placing it in a holder outside a mentor or pastoral room;
- promoting the messages on the card through tutor periods, PSHE lessons, assemblies and individual discussion with pupils and parents/carers.



## Activity 3

Some schools use story-boarding techniques (**Resource sheet 2c**) in order to encourage pupils to look in greater depth at attendance issues. An exciting way of presenting this could be by exploring punctuality and attendance issues through role-play in PSHE lessons. Pupils could perform their work in progress for the whole group; a freeze-frame technique can be used to stop the action and allow the rest of the group to suggest what might happen next.

Examples of scenarios might include the following.

- A pupil is reprimanded for being late for a lesson. He had been bullied in the corridor.
- An excluded pupil encourages two others to truant their next lesson and meet at the local shops.
- A pupil is being picked on because of her trainers and is reluctant to attend the next lesson because it involves the pupils who are bullying her. A teaching assistant tries to get her into the class.

Pupils could work in groups to develop the freeze-frame idea to produce a storyboard that tells their story through 10 or 12 key moments. Pupils generally enjoy planning locations, finding props and deciding roles within the group. Cheap, single-use cameras can be issued to 'shoot' the story. The photographs can be presented, with text, in the style of a 'teen mag' photo-story and displayed in a prominent location in school.

This work could also be delivered using digital cameras, ICT software or pictures from magazines. Local context and settings will give the theme more impact.

Further examples can be found on The Chalkface Project website (referenced on page 9).

## Summary

By the end of this unit pupils will:

- have a better understanding of the range of reasons for poor attendance or punctuality;
- know what support the school can offer to help them if they experience difficulties in attending regularly or being on time.

## Resource sheet 1a

Approach/strategy	Examples	Action points
<p>School systems are scrutinised to evaluate effectiveness in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>encouraging pupils to seek help/support;</li> <li>the support offered to individual pupils;</li> <li>reducing/preventing absenteeism and lateness.</li> </ul>	<p><i>Where and when a pupil seeks help is logged.</i></p> <p><i>Support and attendance rate are compared to measure impact.</i></p> <p><i>Staff are aware of the pupils who need support and there is evidence of staff directing pupils to the appropriate resource.</i></p> <p><i>Data show attendance and punctuality is improving.</i></p>	
<p>Pupils' voices are heard with reference to potential and actual problems with attendance and punctuality.</p>	<p><i>The pupil council collects, collates and feeds back opinions on potential and actual problems in the school and the type of support pupils would find helpful. These views are acted upon.</i></p>	
<p>The school community views issues with attendance and punctuality as symptoms of underlying problems or needs and therefore strives to support pupils and parents/carers to solve the problem.</p>	<p><i>Clear messages displayed around school, parents'/carers' evenings and letters all encourage pupils and parents/carers to come forward if issues with punctuality or attendance are emerging. Where to go and who to see are made explicit.</i></p>	
<p>Pupils are periodically surveyed and asked: <i>If you had a genuine reason for persistent lateness, who or where would you go to seek help?</i></p>	<p><i>This type of survey takes place in the middle of the autumn term. The results inform the pupil council and this in turn leads to actions to address emerging issues.</i></p>	

## Resource sheet 1b

Approach/strategy	Examples	Action points

# Late again!

## Why?

- ✓ Can't get organised in the morning
- ✓ I have to take my younger brother to his school and sometimes I run a little late
- ✓ I have to rely on a lift with an unreliable person
- ✓ I get bullied during registration
- ✓ I have to go home at lunchtime to look after my Mum and the distance involved means that I am nearly always late back

There is always a reason for being late.

If we know then maybe we can help.

### Get help!

### Speak to someone!

How about: form teacher, head of year, school council representative, administrative staff, teaching assistant, learning mentor or anyone else you feel you can talk to.

## Resource sheet 2b

**XXXXXXXX School**

**Don't want to attend or just feel you can't?**

**We can help**

**Come and talk**

**First step**

Phone: 0121 345 678

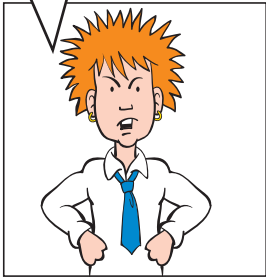
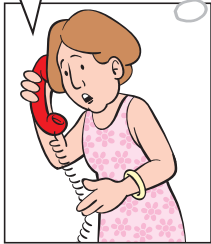
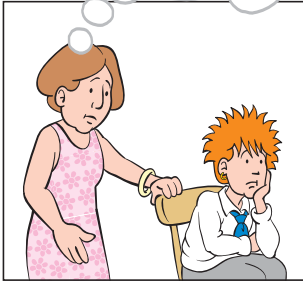

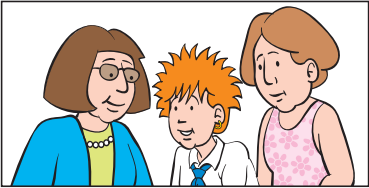
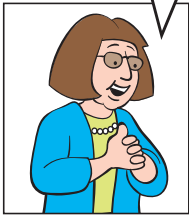
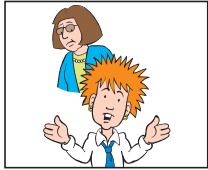
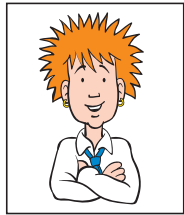
to speak to Jo – our attendance officer

The business card could be two-sided to include, on the reverse, out-of-school support from child support agencies such as ChildLine.

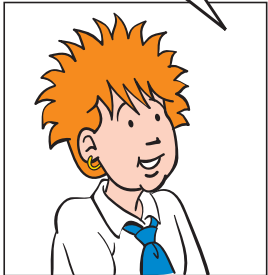



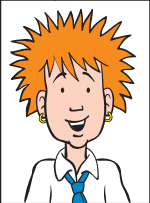


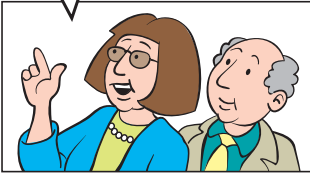
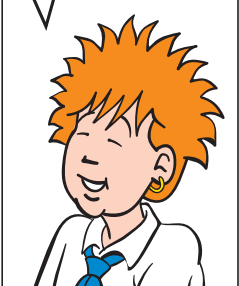
**[www.childline.org.uk](http://www.childline.org.uk)**



## Resource sheet 2c

<p>Natasha refuses to go to school on Monday morning.</p>	<p>The school follow the agreed policy and phones on the first morning Natasha is absent.</p>	<p>Three days later Natasha still refuses to go to school.</p>
<p>No, I won't go... you can't make me! Just say I'm ill when they call.</p> 	<p>Sorry but Natasha is feeling really poorly.</p>  <p>I know it is bad to lie but I'm really worried</p>	<p>I wish she would talk to me. I need some help!</p> 
<p>Natasha's mother refers to the school booklet and contacts the head of year for advice.</p>	<p>The head of year arranges to talk to Natasha and her mother.</p>	<p>Natasha trusted the head of year enough to share some of her worries.</p>
<p>I can appreciate you must be worried - come and see me and we can discuss how our school procedures can help Natasha.</p> 	 <p>What we need to do is get to the bottom of this. If we can find a reason then we're half-way there. Natasha, tell me how you feel when you are in school...</p> 	 <p>I am so mixed up. I hate PE. I can never do my French homework which means the teacher always shouts at me. And to make things worse, all the boys in my form take the mickey out of my hair.</p> 

# Resource sheet 2c page 2 of 2

<p>The head of year talked to Natasha about what she liked about school.</p>	<p>By the end of the meeting Natasha had agreed to return to school and knew that the head of year would be speaking to the teachers.</p>	<p>Before the meeting with Natasha the head of year briefed the French and PE teachers.</p>
<p>I love drama and ICT and I like history... I miss my friends, Matty and Jess.</p> 	<p>Before returning to school I would like to talk to your teachers, OK?</p> <p>Yes, OK.</p> 	 <p>I didn't think Natasha was struggling so much. She seems to cope so well in class. I must review the homework I'm setting.</p> <p>I didn't realise Natasha felt that way. That must be why she doesn't like trying out new things.</p> 
<p>The French teacher met with Natasha. The PE teacher met with Natasha.</p>	<p>Meanwhile the head of year and form teacher had a word with the form group to remind them how they need to look after each other.</p>	<p>Natasha returned to school seven days after truanting. The form tutor meets with her on a regular basis to talk over any potential problems.</p>
<p>Natasha, I didn't realise you were so upset. When you find the work difficult I want you to try not to worry but to see me straight away and I will help you.</p> <p>Yes please!</p>  <p>Natasha, would you like to work with Matty for the next few weeks?</p> 	 <p>Form groups usually watch out for each other. Think how you would feel if you did not have the support and friendship from the pupils in this group.</p> 	<p>I feel so much better now. I am trying for the hockey team on Thursday. I am managing my French homework with Ms Hall's help AND I have a boyfriend who said he fell in love with my hair.</p> 

9 Attendance Unit: 9.3P	
<b>Title</b>	What to do if a pupil misses school for a short or long period
<b>Level</b>	Developing good practice
<b>Audience</b>	Pupils
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To help schools review current systems for supporting pupils returning from short or long absences</li> <li>To raise staff awareness of the need to support all pupils on their return</li> <li>To support representative pupil groups to review current school systems for reintegration</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pastoral leaders and form tutors can use this unit to promote group discussion and feedback improving the current system</li> <li>Curriculum leaders can use this unit to review existing policies and protocols on catch-up and attitudes to returning pupils</li> <li>School councils and other representative groups can also use this unit</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>an improved response from surveyed pupils to the quantity and quality of support offered on their return;</li> <li>a reduction in absences and the length of absence for identified pupils.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	Pupil support systems
<b>Links to other materials 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> <p>Staff: Ready for more</p> <p>9.9S Supporting vulnerable pupils and those who are reluctant to attend</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>Advice on whole-school behaviour and attendance policy</i> (DfES, 2003)</p> <p>Annex C – Guidance on behaviour and attendance: attendance</p> <p><i>Tackling Truancy Together</i> (DfEE 0084/2001)</p> <p>This document contains case studies showing a range of initiatives carried out by School Attendance Services across the country</p> <p><a href="http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship">www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship</a></p> <p>Citizenship at Key Stage 3, Unit 17: School linking</p> <p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance</a></p> <p>DfES improving attendance website – provides information, case studies and opportunities for the sharing of good practice on school attendance</p>

# What to do if a pupil misses school for a short or long period

## Introduction

When pupils have been absent for any length of time, integration back into school can at minimum be unsettling but for some pupils the challenges presented can be so daunting that extending the absence seems to them to be the only option.

In some cases the period of absence is planned by parents/carers, for example, to allow a medical treatment, or an approved visit abroad. In these cases consider how the following strategies could be used to prevent potential difficulties.

Consider a time when you returned to the workforce after an absence. Use the table to prompt your thoughts.

On my return:

I was welcomed	↔	Nobody noticed my return
I was immediately informed about key issues (via minutes, circulars, colleagues)	↔	I wasn't updated and therefore not aware of any new thinking or changes to the routine
I was supported to meet deadlines	↔	I wasn't offered support and struggled to meet deadlines

Now consider the situation from a pupil's perspective.

How well does the school support pupils who return from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• short-term absence;</li> <li>• long-term absence?</li> </ul>	What kind of support is available for each type of absence?  Is the support consistent across the school?	Are pupils made aware of the support available to them? How?  Do pupils have to ask for support or is it immediately available?
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## Evidence into action



### Activity 1

**Resource sheet 1a** has three scenarios describing pupils returning from an absence. It gives details about the length of the absence and the experiences encountered by each pupil. The final section includes suggestions from the pupils on what they would like included in the system.

#### Task 1

Use **Resource sheet 1a** to promote discussion with a group of pupils. This could be an activity for the school council.

#### Task 2

Identify approximately three pupils in each of the absence categories:

- one day;
- several days;
- more than two weeks.

Consider how your school responded to each pupil.

Consider holding a brief interview with each pupil to ascertain their perceptions of the school's responses.

#### Task 3

During both tasks identify successful aspects of the school system that promote smooth and successful reintegration. What are the resources and staff strengths that support the process? What could be improved? How can you begin to make these improvements? Use or adapt

**Resource sheet 1b** to help you.

A number of different factors impact on the way that pupils respond to a return to school, including:

- personal characteristics, e.g. level of confidence;
- relationships with peers, e.g. strength of peer network;
- relationship with staff, e.g. knowing one/some/all staff understand;
- length of absence;
- frequency of absences, e.g. is absent at least once a week;
- reason for absence, e.g. bullying;
- concerns about falling behind with work.

Because the profile for each pupil will be different, the combination of staff skills and school resources will also need to be carefully planned to meet the pupil's individual needs. Resource sheet 1b could be used to discuss what actions might be taken for different cases.



## Activity 2

Examine the profiles for pupils A and B and consider the skills and resources that would support the reintegration of each both efficiently and effectively. This activity could be used with a representative pupil group or in discussion between an identified pupil group and their mentor.

	Profile	Staff skills	Resources
<b>Pupil A</b>	<p>Confident</p> <p>Strong supportive peer group</p> <p>Gets on well with most staff</p> <p>There are a few problems with one teacher</p> <p>Returned after seven days' absence – the first absence this year, which was due to flu</p>		
<b>Pupil B</b>	<p>Shy and can be easily embarrassed</p> <p>Has one close friend</p> <p>Rarely responds in whole-class teaching</p> <p>Most of the staff know very little about her</p> <p>Two days' absence but this pattern is repeated most months</p> <p>Reason for absence was stated as 'poorly'</p>		

Schools that respond to attendance issues carefully offer a differentiated model and ensure that pupils are aware of how to access the support. This ensures pupils on their return:

- feel a sense of belonging;
- are appropriately supported emotionally and academically;
- want to continue attending.

Examples of good practice include:

- the support of the group tutor who deals with the vast majority of returning pupils. Their role is to support the pupil through the first day if there are concerns or issues;
- homework and catch-up surgeries;
- reminding staff regularly of the importance of the reintegration process;
- informing all staff of potential issues in a morning briefing or via a concern noticeboard;

- peer support – pupils are assigned a ‘buddy’ to help them settle and catch up with work;
- issuing returning pupils with a support leaflet which gives information about where to go for extra support;
- supporting pupils identified as vulnerable through a partnership approach between a number of stakeholders. These are selected from, for example, form tutor, head of year, pastoral manager, learning mentor, inclusion manager, teaching assistant, SENCO, etc.;
- when pupils return from an absence, which is greater than five days, contacting parents/carers to inform how their child has settled.

**Resource sheet 2** describes a sample of specific strategies adopted by schools and the impact made.

Consider these strategies alongside evidence gathered about your present system to inform next steps.

## Questions to consider

Does the school system effectively support all pupils who return after a short/long absence?

Use **Resource sheet 3** as a starting point for materials you might want to produce to support pupils’ reintegration after an absence.

Pupil representative groups could design posters, leaflets or cards that are contextualised for their own school or that target specific groups of their peers.

Could any changes or additions be made to improve the reintegration of these pupils?

## Summary

By the end of this unit:

- pupil representatives will have reviewed the current school systems for reintegrating pupils after an absence;
- pupils and staff will have identified improvements to current systems and/or new systems to promote smooth reintegration.





## Resource sheet 1a

	Josie	Raji	Olivia
How long were you absent?	1 day	6 days	13 days
How did you feel on the morning of your return to school?	<i>Fine except I missed maths yesterday and therefore the homework. This means I will be expected to do it tonight on top of today's homework and what if I don't understand it?</i>	<i>I was excited about meeting my mates but really worried about all the work I had missed.</i>	<i>Really nervous. I just knew that I would feel lost in most of my lessons unless they were beginning a new topic. I was hoping my friend would be there to support me.</i>
How did you feel at the end of the first day?	<i>Not bad. As I expected I was set the maths homework. We started a new topic in maths so I was not sure how much of the homework I would be able to do. The French teacher forgot to set homework which gave me some time to have a go at the maths. The history teacher hadn't noticed I had been absent. I just carried on with the project we started last week.</i>	<i>Some of the day went well. A couple of teachers said it was good to see me again. I am really annoyed that I missed the basketball trials. Now I can't play for the school team and I don't think that is fair. My geography teacher has put me in a bad mood because she expected me to copy up all the notes I have missed. That's three lessons' worth! I borrowed a mate's book but I will never get around to it. What a waste of time. There is so much more to do. Oh and I got into trouble for forgetting my calculator. I got a detention but he let me off once I explained. Science didn't make any sense. I was a bit worried about the next lesson.</i>	<i>Really awful. Three of the lessons made no sense to me. One teacher commented sarcastically about me turning up and one of the boys joined in and made a nasty comment. The history teacher was really nice and asked me how I was. The French teacher didn't notice I was back. I was pleased my friend was there. If she wasn't there I think I would have gone home at lunchtime.</i>
When did you feel you were back in the routine?	<i>After I had the subjects that I missed yesterday.</i>	<i>After a whole week. Once I had a couple of lessons in each subject.</i>	<i>I still don't. I worry every day.</i>
How were you supported?	<i>I wasn't. It was just expected that I would fit back in. It wasn't my fault I was away. It sometimes seems like you are punished for being ill.</i>	<i>My form teacher was great. He said, 'Any problems come and see me.' I will see him about geography and I will mention the basketball team.</i>	<i>My form teacher is really nice. She always asks me how I am. I don't tell her how worried I am. My history teacher booked a Tuesday after school to support me. That helped.</i>
What else could the school have done?	<i>If all the teachers remembered that I was absent for a day this would help.</i>	<i>The teachers should keep notes for pupils who have missed work or photocopy another pupil's notes.</i>	<i>The teachers should help me more. How am I supposed to know what is going on after missing two weeks?</i>
What could you have done?	<i>Get my form teacher to write a note to the teachers I am worried about.</i>	<i>I could have asked for a note from my form teacher, which would have prevented the detention.</i>	<i>Maybe I should carry something round to remind them. I should talk to my form teacher about how I am feeling.</i>

## Resource sheet 1b

Pupil and length of absence	How is successful reintegration promoted?	Resources	Staff skills	What could be improved?
1 day +				
Several days				
Two weeks +				
Long term (one term or more)				

## Resource sheet 2

Strategy	Impact
Form tutors/pastoral leaders inform all staff via a concern noticeboard in the staff room when potentially vulnerable pupils are absent or pupils are about to have a planned long-term absence.	Returning pupils report an increase in the number of staff giving them attention and offering support in the first few lessons after they return.
At the end of the first day back pupils report to a nominated person, for example, form tutor, head of year, mentor, etc. This is an opportunity to talk about any issues and request additional support.	Although some pupils still feel anxious during the first day back they are reassured that there is support on offer if needed. Because staff awareness is raised it encourages a more proactive and supportive response from subject teachers.
A notice is displayed in classrooms and corridors prompting pupils to seek support if they feel that they are not coping. An example is included on <b>Resource sheet 3</b> .	The prompt encourages pupils to come forward and discuss their anxieties. Subject teachers, form tutors and other pastoral staff are informed and support is organised.
Assemblies to highlight how it feels to return after a day plus absence. Role-play by pupils and teachers can really emphasise the message.	Raised awareness that it is OK to feel a bit anxious but there is support. Staff increase their level of support for pupils returning from a short or long absence.
A support leaflet is issued on the first day back. An example is included on <b>Resource sheet 3</b> .	Pupils feel more confident that the school cares. The checklist prompts supportive actions.
On request, pupils are issued with an 'I have just returned' card. This is either put on the subject teacher's desk or displayed on the pupil's desk as a reminder to staff. An example is included on <b>Resource sheet 3</b> .	Staff report that this simple system prompts them into taking a more supportive response. Without it, they have to rely on memory and/or the register taken at the beginning of the lesson.

# Have you just returned to school?

**Feeling as if you are not coping?**

**Tell someone ... a friend, form tutor,  
parent/carer, head of year, subject teacher,  
a member of the support staff.**

**If we know how you are feeling,  
we can help.**

This is an example of the front and back of a guidance leaflet issued to pupils on their return to school.

<p>If you are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• worried about any lessons</li><li>• having difficulties with catching up or keeping up</li><li>• generally anxious</li></ul> <p>then you need support.</p> <p>How did the day go?</p> <div></div> <p>Note any issues/concerns that have arisen.</p> <div></div>	<p><i>Welcome back</i></p>
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Below is the information inside the leaflet.

<p>Use this quick checklist to support your return.</p> <p>Have your parents/carers notified school about the reason for your absence? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No →</p> <p>Do you know which lessons you have today? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No →</p> <p>Have you brought the correct equipment, e.g. PE kit, calculator? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No →</p> <p>Will you be able to cope with issues to do with missed coursework or homework? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No →</p> <p>Use the back page to record any issues or concerns that you experience through the day.</p> <p>Remember to go to your form tutor at the end of the day with this leaflet.</p>	<p>Get a note from your parent/carer. Without the note your absence will be classed as unauthorised, i.e. you have truanted.</p> <p>Quickly check this with a friend or your form tutor.</p> <p>Explain this to your form tutor and ask for a note.</p> <p>Inform your form tutor or head of year who will be able to arrange help.</p>
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## Resource sheet 3 page 3 of 3

### Returning cards

Issued to pupils who want staff to notice at a glance that they have recently returned from an absence.

<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Returning card</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>has just returned from a</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>.... day absence.</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>First day back was .....</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Signed .....</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><b>Date: .....</b></p>
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9 Attendance Unit: 9.4P	
<b>Title</b>	Ensuring that pupils feel valued and are motivated to attend
<b>Level</b>	Getting started
<b>Audience</b>	Pupils
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To develop whole-school approaches to attendance for identified pupils</li> <li>To support identified pupils to improve attendance</li> <li>To help identified pupils review motivational factors relating to attendance</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The behaviour and attendance leader can use this unit in work with the pastoral team to build the profiles of a group of pupils. Outcomes and next steps to be shared with all relevant staff (including teaching assistants and support staff)</li> <li>Form tutors, pastoral and/or curriculum leaders, pupil mentors, teaching assistants use the scaling exercise to identify individual pupils' needs and next steps to support improved attendance to school and lessons</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupil surveys showing an improvement in pupil attitudes to attendance;</li> <li>lesson observations showing an improvement in staff–pupil relationships;</li> <li>an improvement in the attendance of 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>Pupil support systems</p> <p>Bullying</p> <p>Curriculum</p>
<b>Links to other materials in this section</b>	<p>Staff: Getting started</p> <p>9.4S Developing organisational structures that promote regular attendance and punctuality</p> <p>Parents/carers: Getting started</p> <p>9.4PC Helping parents/carers understand the importance of 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><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.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship">www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship</a> Citizenship at Key Stage 3, Unit 17: School linking</p>

# Ensuring that pupils feel valued and are motivated to attend

## Introduction

Research conducted by the University of Glasgow (2003) produced the following findings on pupil absence:

*School factors was the largest group of reasons given for missing school. Many pupils said no more than 'School's boring' but others were more specific. Some reasons were related to the function and structure of school; the most common of these were:*

- problems with lessons*
- problems with teachers*
- opportunism*
- not wanting to get into trouble*
- the complexity of secondary school; and*
- fear of returning to school.*

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

When pupils are asked why they attend school they often provide the usual response 'because we have to'. However, when asked to reflect further on what motivates them to attend, their responses fall into the following categories.

Being interested in parts of the curriculum. <i>'I love history. It is worth coming to school just for that.'</i>	Appreciating the value of education and the role it plays. <i>'It is important to do well in school and get qualifications. I want to be a nurse.'</i>	Forming friendships. <i>'I love meeting up with my friends every day. I really enjoy their company.'</i>
Aspiring to a role of responsibility. <i>'I want to be a prefect so I know I have to keep up a good attendance record.'</i>	Feeling that it's a nice place to be. <i>'I like coming to school. It is so calm and friendly. Home life is so different.'</i>	Valuing being listened to. Wanting to make a difference. <i>'Pupil council really makes a difference to us pupils. Staff and pupils really respect what we have to say.'</i>
Having a group identity. Valuing belonging to a group, form, team or school. <i>'Our form is the best in the year. We are always recognised for our talents and efforts.'</i>	Enjoying extracurricular activities. <i>'I just can't believe I have been selected for the rugby team.'</i>	Feeling safe. <i>'I feel really safe in school. I don't like going home. Holidays are the worst.'</i>



These responses highlight the motivational aspects of school life as well as the human desires to feel included, valued and cared for and the importance of positive, respectful relationships.

Although it is a statutory requirement for pupils to attend full-time education, they will be motivated to attend if the school environment is safe, welcoming, supportive and stimulating.

Consideration could be given to encouraging schools to provide their own examples of attitudes and motivation by interviewing representative sample of pupils – the school council and/or peer mentors could be involved in the interviewing.

Regular consideration of these issues will allow early identification of developing trends in motivation, which can be compared with patterns of attendance.

## Exploring pupil motivation



### Activity 1

This activity could be carried out by pastoral tutors, teaching assistants or other appropriate staff in the school.

Select a small sample of pupils with varying degrees of attendance from excellent to poor. Use **Resource sheet 1** to map out individual pupils' profiles. Use the outcomes to identify any common relationships between the different factors and the attendance data. For example, do low-attending pupils receive fewer classroom rewards, including verbal praise?

Through discussion with pupils:

- identify any patterns in the responses;
- decide whether a larger pupil cohort is needed to ensure more accurate data.

This activity will need to be carefully facilitated so that individual pupils are not stigmatised and feel supported, therefore it is important for the school to identify who would be the most appropriate members of staff to carry out the task.

Finally, consider how the analysis of the data could be used with pupils to develop strategies for improving their motivation.



### Activity 2

This activity could be carried out by pastoral tutors, teaching assistants or other appropriate staff in the school, working with a representative pupil group.

Review the core values of the school and the principles that form the basis of the behaviour and attendance policy. The facilitator will need to draw together the issues raised (possibly via a survey or structured discussion) with a selected pupil group, for example:

- peer mentors;
- pupil council;
- pupils carrying out an assignment as part of their Key Stage 4 citizenship programme.

Using the pupils' responses as evidence, consider how these values and principles support and promote pupils' attendance. Note any issues to be addressed and devise an action plan. There is an example in the table below and **Resource sheet 2** provides a blank form that could be used to carry out this analysis.

Core value	Principle	Evidence	Issues to address
Emotional and physical well-being	Protecting and nurturing children and adults in an environment that is safe, permanent and creates a sense of belonging	<i>All the pupils expressed their desire to attend our school. The majority felt safe Approximately 50% thought the staff genuinely cared for them</i>	<i>How many pupils don't feel safe? Anti-bullying policy needs to be reviewed and made more explicit. Staff attitudes need to be explored</i>
Learning as life enhancing	Learning is an enjoyable and challenging experience, stimulating learning through matching teaching techniques and strategies to a range of learning styles and needs	<i>The majority of pupils contributed well in most lessons The higher-attending pupils maximise learning opportunities by attending a range of extracurricular clubs</i>	<i>Pupils' responses reinforce other evidence gathered on two departments with issues. A programme of support is currently being mapped Explore why certain groups of pupils don't access extra-curricular activities What more can be done?</i>
Mutual respect	Respect for the dignity of others and respect for oneself, acknowledging the complementary rights and responsibilities of each member of the community	<i>No real pattern. A few pupils in each attendance category demonstrated a lack of respect for peers and staff. Interestingly these same pupils had not volunteered or been given a tangible responsibility such as peer support, assembly duty</i>	<i>Explore the possibility of allocating specific responsibilities to a particular group of pupils. Monitor the impact on their sense of 'belonging' and changes in attitude towards staff and peers</i>



### Activity 3

This activity could be carried out by pastoral staff, a teaching assistant or mentor with individually identified pupils.

**Resource sheet 3** focuses on some of the key reasons for pupils not attending school and maps them to the contrasting feelings and behaviours that support attendance.

You could use Resource sheet 3 to encourage an identified pupil to articulate their school experiences. Work through the outcomes on **Resource sheet 4** together to identify any actions that could be turned into no more than three specific targets and consider the support needed to achieve these.

After an agreed period of time, use Resource sheet 3 to identify progress.

The scenario of Gavin is partially worked through to exemplify the process. Gavin's score on the 'Not engaged in lessons' scale is 4. He truants or constantly interrupts in about a third of his lessons.

What are the reasons for achieving the current score?	<i>Gavin fully engages in history and science and enjoys maths.</i>
Explore these reasons and identify key characteristics.	<i>Include staff, pupil, parent/carer contributions. In history and science the teachers break the lessons into small steps and use lots of visual prompts to support learning. In maths, the teacher allows Gavin to sit with a friend who supports him when he is stuck. Gavin feels confident that he can ask any of these teachers for help at any time. Gavin receives most of his rewards from these lessons.</i>
Consider strategies staff, pupil and/or parents/carers could use to support a move of one point on the scale. Put this into action and monitor the outcome.	<i>The geography teacher is informed about Gavin's success in other subjects. He meets with Gavin and discusses seating arrangements to maximise support from both Gavin and his peers. The geography teacher began to set expectations for small chunks of the lesson and made a conscious effort to increase the use of verbal and non-verbal rewards such as praise and merits. Gavin felt supported and began to engage more in the lessons. After two weeks the outcome was impressive. Gavin had attended all his geography lessons and was beginning to respond to questions in the plenary. Because of the improvement in Gavin's classroom behaviour and attendance, the teacher sent a good news postcard home.</i>
Can the same strategies be repeated in another situation?	
Consider what else could be implemented to move the score up another point.	

## Summary

By the end of this unit:

- schools will be providing additional support to identified pupils to support their attendance;
- pupils will have a greater understanding of the relationship between motivation and attendance;
- pupils will have had the opportunity to provide their views on what motivates them to attend school.

## Resource sheet 1

Use the following table to map individual profiles of pupils in different attendance categories. For example: excellent, good, poor.

	Pupil name _____	Pupil name _____	Pupil name _____
Attendance			
Punctuality			
Rewards			
Sanctions			
Bullying incidents			
Extracurricular clubs/activities			
Contribution in lessons			
Relationships with peers			
Relationships with staff			

## Resource sheet 2

Core value	Principle	Evidence	Issues to address

## Resource sheet 3

Not engaged in lessons	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Fully engaged in lessons
Fears failure	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Open to new experiences
Anxious	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Confident
Non-supportive peer group	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Supportive peer group
Poor parent/carer-school partnership	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent parent/carer-school partnership
Bullied	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Not bullied
Poor relationship with teacher	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	Excellent relationship with teacher

## Resource sheet 4

What are the reasons for the point of the scale?	
Explore these reasons and identify key characteristics.	
Include staff, pupil, parent/carer contributions.	
Consider strategies staff, pupil and/or parents/carers could use to support a move up one point on the scale. Put this into action and monitor the outcome.	
Could the same strategies be adapted for use in other situations?	
Consider what else could be done to move the score up another point.	



9 Attendance Unit: 9.5P	
<b>Title</b>	Preparing for the return to school after an extended absence
<b>Level</b>	Developing good practice
<b>Audience</b>	Pupils
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To consider possible school structures and resources that can help pupils to be quickly and comfortably reintegrated into everyday school life</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>This unit can be used with pupils who have experienced an extended absence.</li> <li>Handouts can be used as prompts with pupils to explore some of the strategies they might like to try to get back into school routines and catch up on missed work</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>improved confidence and achievement by pupils returning to school following extended absence (shown when questioned by support staff).</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	<p>Leadership and management</p> <p>Classroom behaviour</p>
<b>Links to other material in this section</b>	
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>Behaviour and attendance training materials: Core day 2</i> (DfES 0055-2004)</p> <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>Is your child missing out?</i> (DfES ref: PPY 181 (Rev 2002)) School attendance information for parents/carers</p> <p><i>Improving Attendance and Behaviour in Secondary Schools</i> (Ofsted, 2001)</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>

# Preparing for the return to school after an extended absence

## Understanding the problem

A pupil returning to school after an extended absence, perhaps ill health, trauma or truancy, may have many worries and concerns. They will need support to consider their feelings about returning to school and how they might deal with them.

It is important that they are in touch with their form tutor. They could also be encouraged to phone one of their friends or classmates to ask what has been happening during their absence.

Often pupils find it helpful to talk with someone about how they are feeling and to plan their return to school, including how they might solve any problems that may arise. This enables reintegration to get off to a good start, ensures the transition to school is smooth and that the pupil is confident about how they will cope.

The aim would be to avoid, wherever possible, any repetition of the difficulties that caused the initial absence.



### Activity 1

This activity could be used by a member of the pastoral team, teaching assistant or mentor with an identified individual or group of pupils. It could also be used to initiate discussions or develop short role-plays in a PSHE lesson.

Ask pupils, in small groups, to discuss or role-play the following scenario:

*A pupil has been absent for a long period of time. It is time to return to school. What thoughts and feelings are going through the pupil's mind? How might the pupil approach school on the first day back?*

The groups could perform their scenarios, or alternatively representatives from each group could feed back their responses, while a scribe summarises them on the whiteboard.

Having identified the **thoughts** and **feelings** that may arise in this situation, pupils could move on to suggest strategies for helping pupils to reintegrate successfully after a long absence. Some examples follow.

Thoughts	Feelings	Strategies
Looking forward to seeing friends	Excited Apprehensive	Friendship group informed and prepared in advance
My friends might have forgotten me and I will be excluded	Anxious Worried Lonely	Follow usual class system, form teacher to select 'buddy' for first few days
I'll never catch up on my work	'Stressed' Panic Helpless	Catch up sessions organised. Arrangements made for the pupil to receive copies of notes
Teachers won't be sympathetic, they'll see me as a problem	Worried Afraid Nervous	Staff briefing to highlight this issue in advance of the pupil returning and to agree staff responses
Everyone will want to know where I've been and I don't want to tell them	Worried Unsure Nervous	Strategies for politely responding to this question planned with the pupil on their return

Now ask them to consider that pupils may react differently depending on the reasons for their absence.

Using the research findings below for information, prompt discussion on the following points.

- Are there measures described in the research that would benefit pupils returning from absence in this school?
- Are there measures that look good but about which the school needs more information (and how could pupils help find that information)?
- How do the measures support pupils who are absent for different reasons?

*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 PAs, 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;*
- *sports leadership projects for Y9s 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 ask pupils to put forward additional **strategies** that respond to the **feelings** and **thoughts** of pupils returning from a long period of absence.

You could also use the outcomes from this activity to involve pupils in planning support for one of their peers who is returning to school after an extended absence.



## Activity 2

This activity could be used in a PSHE lesson or in tutor time.

Look at the scenarios on **Resource sheet 1**. Use them as prompt cards for small group discussions, or as starting points for short role-plays which can be shown to the rest of the group.

Freeze-frame techniques are useful for halting the action at key moments and asking the class to suggest ways forward. Encourage pupils to discuss the consequences of the choices they make at each stage.

You may wish to generate your own scenarios with a class.

To summarise this activity, you could ask pupils to vote on the best solutions, or role-play discussed 'good' and 'bad' strategies. Pupils could devise a plan to support a fictional pupil returning to their tutor group after an extended absence.

**Resource sheet 2** offers suggested strategies for the successful reintegration of identified pupils. Representative pupil groups might discuss these and change or add to the list to make it relevant to their own school. The suggestions could then be discussed with the senior leadership team or pastoral staff in an agreed forum.

## Summary

By the end of this unit pupils will have:

- explored the range of feelings that they or others may have when returning to school after a long absence;
- considered the sort of advice they could give to a classmate who returns to school after a long absence.

## Resource sheet 1

### Catching up on missed work – scenarios

#### **Nita and Shakespeare**

Returning from an illness, Nita knows from her friends that she has missed Acts 2 and 3 of the set Shakespeare play. It was hard enough before she fell ill, but now she worries that she won't understand anything and will fail the examination.

*How can Nita catch up the missed Shakespeare material, bearing in mind that it is probably too hard for her to read without help?*

#### **Ross and the Vietnam War**

While Ross was off, his class covered the whole of the Vietnam War and are now moving on to a new topic. Ross likes history and feels that he can help himself to catch up.

*Suggest two or three different ways in which Ross can get himself up to speed on the Vietnam War without having to copy out pages of notes.*

#### **Lucy and the practical subjects**

Lucy missed two weeks of school and knows how she could catch up the subjects in which there are notes. But she takes several practical subjects: food technology, drama, ceramics and PE.

*Suggest one or two ways in which Lucy might compensate for having missed these practical lessons.*

#### **Krishna and a difficult subject**

Krishna has gathered photocopies from his friends to help him catch up before he goes back, but he doesn't understand the work he's missed in physics. The topic is still going on, so he worries that he won't understand the lessons when he goes back.

*Suggest two or three ways Krishna might get help to understand the work before his first physics lesson next week.*

#### **Sharon's convalescence**

Sharon is out of hospital, but the doctor has ordered a fortnight of convalescence. She is mentally alert though she tires easily. She spends most of the day on the sofa watching TV and dozing occasionally. But she is feeling better for longer every day.

*What could Sharon do to get ready for school in this situation? Are there things that would fit in with her day?*

## Resource sheet 2

### Catching up on missed work

- Photocopy notes taken by friends.
- Go through the photocopies with a classmate and work out which ones you understand and which are difficult.
- Invite a friend round for the evening to go over notes you don't understand.
- Find the section of the textbook for a topic you can't follow in the notes.
- In some subjects, you can find TV programmes, videos or library books that cover the topic. Texts in English literature are a good example.
- For practical subjects, you might be able to organise the work at home, for example, cooking particular dishes for food technology.
- Friends are a good source of catch-up notes, but the form tutor will help to collect up and pass on particularly useful work.
- Tell your form tutor or the subject teacher if there is a topic that is unclear from the notes and arrange a time to talk to them.

9 Attendance Unit: 9.6P	
<b>Title</b>	Getting additional help with coursework
<b>Level</b>	Ready for more
<b>Audience</b>	Pupils
<b>Purpose</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Helping identified pupils to cope with coursework demands</li> <li>Reviewing and improving coursework support systems</li> </ul>
<b>Possible use</b>	<p>This unit can be used for:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>pupils' self-study</li> <li>staff to use the pupil resource sheet with an individual pupil or group of pupils</li> <li>joint pastoral and curriculum leaders project to review support for pupils</li> </ul>
<b>Impact can be measured by</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>positive feedback from pupils on support strategies;</li> <li>positive feedback from staff working with identified pupils;</li> <li>new systems put in place as a direct result of the response from pupils;</li> <li>the fact that more pupils successfully complete coursework on time;</li> <li>a decrease in the number of trancies during the coursework period.</li> </ul>
<b>Links to other action plan toolkit sections</b>	<p>Curriculum</p> <p>Pupil support systems</p>
<b>Links to other materials in this section</b>	<p>Staff: Ready for more</p> <p>9.6S Supporting pupils to catch up with coursework</p> <p>Parents/carers: Ready for more</p> <p>9.6PC Supporting parents/carers to help their child with coursework</p>
<b>Reference to other resources</b>	<p><i>The Learning Challenge</i> materials (DfES 0393-2003)</p> <p>Part of the Key Stage 3 National Strategy intervention package for underperforming pupils</p> <p><a href="http://www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance">www.dfes.gov.uk/schoolattendance</a></p> <p>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></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> <p><a href="http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship">www.standards.dfes.gov.uk/schemes2/citizenship</a></p> <p>Citizenship at Key Stage 3, Unit 17: School linking</p> <p><a href="http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize">www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize</a></p> <p>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></p> <p>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></p> <p>AS Guru offers help with general studies, English, maths and biology</p> <p><a href="http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk">www.standards.dfes.gov.uk</a></p> <p>Further information on learning mentor good practice</p>

## Getting additional help with coursework

Deadlines for coursework can create a great deal of stress for pupils, particularly those who feel they are struggling to complete their coursework on time and to a satisfactory quality. This stress and fear of failure can lead to absenteeism. There are some key skills that pupils need to develop to cope with coursework:

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

If they do not already have these skills then pupils are likely to struggle to meet the deadlines set.

The problems that pupils face can be a result of falling behind with their coursework, finding themselves in the centre of a vicious circle, getting further and further behind, feeling increasing levels of stress and becoming less likely to catch up or ask for help. This can lead to absence from school rather than facing the problem.

As pupils progress through school they develop self-awareness about their personal work style and the support they need to produce work that reflects their ability.

Effective schools provide good support mechanisms and realistic schedules for pupils. This unit considers some approaches to supporting pupils to help them avoid coursework stress and subsequent absence.





## Activity 1

Consider the comments made below by three pupils when asked about the key factors that support them in producing their 'best'.

Stuart	Abi	Karl
<i>'I am really badly organised and find it difficult to settle to any sort of coursework. I always leave things to the last minute and if I can get away with it I let deadlines come and go. I produce my best in subjects where the tasks are broken down into smaller pieces and I have reminders about deadlines. I feel I can cope better with smaller pieces. The reminders are a good opportunity for me to talk to staff about how I am getting on. I always feel a sense of achievement in these subjects and the teachers' praise encourages me to do the next piece. It is a pity the other subject teachers don't catch on.'</i>	<i>'I need to know exactly how long I have got to complete the work. I then make a timetable and try to stick to it. I get very flustered if I begin to fall behind. I am very independent so only seek advice if I am really stuck. I know that no-one at home will know the answer so I have to wait until I get chance to ask the teacher. This can sometimes put me in a state especially if I have to wait a few days. Mum is good to have around because she understands me and calms me down. She helps me put the whole thing in perspective. She has suggested that the school open a coursework support club. I hope they listen.'</i>	<i>'I just can't be bothered. I hate deadlines. When my dad gets a letter about me missing a deadline, he just shouts at me. There's nowhere to work at home anyway. The others always seem to know what they are doing – I feel left out. I'm not going to do the work, no-one can make me.'</i>

This activity could be used with identified individual pupils perhaps with the help of a teaching assistant or mentor, or with a form group at the start of a new piece of coursework. It is important to note that the level of support needed will vary widely. The following case study could be used to discuss with pupils some of the complex relationships between learning challenges and attendance, identifying how support needs to be tailored to the individual's circumstances.

*Jon, a Year 10 boy, was having problems with attendance. He lacked interest and motivation and was involved in drugs. When talking he always looked dizzy and glazed, and he found it hard to interact with peers. He had few friends and police had his name on the theft and burglary register. Jon 'hated' English and was getting behind in his English coursework.*

*Jon came from a large extended Asian family – his father was disabled and one sister had a conviction of theft and robbery. His elder brother, whom Jon looked on as a role model, was at university. Jon claimed that he didn't get on well with his mother*

and he didn't want the school to contact her, as he thought she'd get upset and shout at him.

*I worked with Jon on several levels. Firstly, he attended one-to-one sessions where we built up a good rapport, I arranged liaison with Base 10 [voluntary sector provision], helped Jon in his search for a part-time job, and got him back on track with his English coursework. I also enlisted the support of his elder brother, and established that if Jon was found playing truant again, his brother and mother would be contacted immediately. At the same time, we worked on Jon's motivation and morale boosting with reward and praise, both at school and at home.*

*After 10 months of joint effort, Jon has dramatically changed. His attendance is good, with no truancy. Base 10 said that no more help was required and that Jon's overall attitude is improving no end.'*

*(Learning Mentor Good Practice, Excellence in Cities, [www.standards.dfes.gov.uk](http://www.standards.dfes.gov.uk))*

Use **Resource sheet 1** to generate a discussion into different ways of approaching coursework. Pupils can score themselves and compare with a partner, or discuss with their mentor.

Each of the scores can be used to outline a way of approaching coursework. For example:

1. Make a timetable for use at home which sets aside times during the week for studying.
2. Use strategies for picking out key words from text.
3. Use mind-mapping techniques with a member of staff.
4. Give myself small rewards for meeting mini-deadlines. Drink lots of water, and exercise regularly.
5. Identify a peer with similar learning profile and share strategies.
6. Make a clear career plan, with short term goals, perhaps with a Connexions personal adviser.

Ask pupils to suggest solutions for each other. Pupils could summarise the points raised on the whiteboard or a flipchart.

Many pupils, when asked, can identify the types of support they need with coursework. This can range from an encouraging comment to organised additional lessons after school. Effective schools map pupil needs to school and home support systems, which in turn builds a sense of understanding and trust between all parties. It is important to ensure that parents/carers are involved in coursework discussions and support as they can provide invaluable encouragement to the pupil.

## Systems to support pupils

As schools increasingly scrutinise attendance data, some are finding links between absence and coursework demands. How might you know if pupils in your school were truanting because of coursework demands? You may wish to reflect back on the case study in this unit to stimulate discussion with the pupils.



### Activity 2

Consider the following scenario.

Edward, a Year 11 pupil, had accumulated a backlog of two history essays and the design section of his D&T coursework. Because he was concerned about not being entered unless 'he came up with the goods' he chose to truant from school, for one week, to facilitate his own catch-up programme.

When asked how this could have been prevented, he gave the following solutions.

- There should be closer monitoring and encouragement in lessons dedicated to coursework. Edward could easily sit with a piece of blank paper in some lessons and achieve nothing by the end.
- Interim deadlines could be set instead of only a final deadline.
- There should be somewhere to keep his coursework in school. In lessons where Edward took his coursework home some of it was mislaid and had to be repeated. He would also promise certain staff that good progress was being made although he was doing little work.
- Information for parents about coursework expectations should be mapped to timelines and deadlines. Edward knew that his parents would have encouraged and supported him to ensure that deadlines were met.

Consider the following.

- Which of these approaches are in place in your school?
- What additional strategies are in operation?
- How are pupils consulted about the support they need?
- How are school resources, including staff, deployed to support pupils who need this support? Include roles played by teaching assistants and learning mentors.
- How do different departments approach these issues?
- Can you identify any particular approaches that could be used consistently across the whole school?
- How do you cater for the range of pupil work styles?
- How are staff modelling skills for pupils?
- How are pupils supported to manage increasing levels of stress, for example, the need for relaxation, hydration, regular exercise and 'mini-treats'?



### Activity 3

Refer to **Resource sheet 2** and consider how you might use this with pupils to explore:

- how they achieve their best work;
- the type of support that benefits them most.

Responses to Resource sheet 2 could inform class teachers, teaching assistants, learning mentors, subject and pastoral leaders about individual pupils' needs.

A collation of the responses can be used as an evidence base to support the effectiveness of existing systems and the development of further support. Consideration could be given to producing a version of Resource sheet 1 that caters for more visual learners, with more graphics and pictorial representations of the items listed.

## Summary

By the end of this unit pupils will:

- have identified their work style profile;
- know more about the type of support the school can offer and will have had the opportunity to identify the forms of support they would benefit most from.

## Unit 9.6P: Attendance Pupils

I always get things done as soon as possible

## The behaviour and attendance action plan toolkit

My mind goes blank when  
I see a page of text

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I can memorise  
text easily

\_\_\_\_\_

I get up regularly for a drink,  
a walk, or something to eat

53

I try to figure things out by myself

1 ←————→ 10

I can't really be bothered  
to think about it.

## Resource sheet 2

