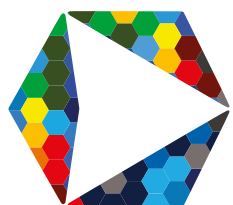
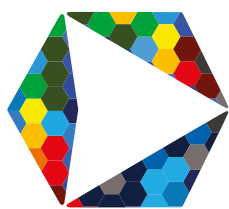


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ATTENDANCE GUIDE 2025



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ATTENDANCE GUIDE 2025



CONTENTS





INTRODUCTION

School is a place of discovery, energy and possibility. It is where students explore who they are, where they are going and what inspires them. To make the most of everything school offers, academically, socially and personally, consistent attendance is key.

Every school day matters. Missing time in school does not just create gaps in knowledge, it disrupts friendships, routines and a student's sense of belonging. Regular attendance allows students to connect with peers, engage in rich learning experiences and develop strong, trusted relationships with adults who support their journey.



At Eastern Multi-Academy Trust, we see attendance as central to safeguarding and to helping every pupil thrive. Regular attendance shapes not only academic success but also mental health and longer term life chances. While the pandemic left a legacy of disrupted habits, we are committed to reversing that trend and creating a culture where attendance is the norm, not the exception.

We believe that all students can achieve excellent attendance when the right systems and relationships are in place. By learning from what works, both in our schools and others like ours, we aim to create environments where students want to be every day.

Our strategy is built on current research, clear evidence and our own experience. We are ambitious for every pupil, particularly those facing disadvantage, to attend more consistently than they may have thought possible.

WHERE ARE WE NOW?

National attendance trends have shifted significantly in recent years, presenting both challenges and opportunities for schools across the country - including those within Eastern Multi-Academy Trust. The data highlights the urgency for focused and sustained action:

► Decline in High Attendance

The proportion of pupils attending 95% or more of school has dropped from 64% to just 50%, representing a significant reduction in consistent attendance.

► Rise in Severe Absence

The number of pupils missing more than 50% of school has tripled, from 1.3% to 3.9%. This group now represents a critical area for targeted intervention.

► Casual Absence Adds Up

A large share - 42% - of all missed sessions come from pupils with attendance between 85-95%. These pupils often fly under the radar but collectively account for a huge number of lost learning days.

► Strong Link to Attainment

Students who attend school more than 95% of the time are twice as likely to achieve Grade 5 or above in both English and Maths compared to those attending at 90%. Each additional week in school makes a measurable difference.

► Early and Preventative Action Matters

Even small shifts in attendance bands (e.g., from 90% to 95%) can change academic outcomes significantly. Supporting transitions - particularly from Year 6 to Year 7 - is essential to avoid common dips.

► Years 6 to 8 Are a Risk Point

Nationally, there is a marked decline in attendance in Years 7 and 8, particularly among disadvantaged pupils. This highlights the importance of early secondary support.

► Leadership Makes the Difference

Differences in school attendance cannot be solely explained by context or demographics. Leadership, culture and effective attendance strategies play a vital role in closing the gap between schools with similar profiles.

This national picture sets the context for our work across EMAT. It reinforces the need for strong systems, high expectations, and a culture where attendance is a shared priority across our Trust.

WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE?

Our aspiration is a return to pre-pandemic attendance levels as a minimum. However, averages can hide variation by school or group.

Therefore our aspiration is:

97:97:97 - a standard of 97%+ attendance across:

- Primary
- Secondary
- SEND and disadvantaged pupils

STRATEGIC LEVERS

STRATEGIC
LEVER 1

**FOSTERING
A STRONG
CULTURE OF
BELONGING**

STRATEGIC
LEVER 3

**BUILDING
COLLECTIVE
RESPONSIBILITY**

STRATEGIC
LEVER 2

**ENSURING
HIGH-QUALITY
TEACHING AND
PROVISION**

STRATEGIC
LEVER 4

**UNDERSTANDING
THE ROOT
CAUSES OF
ABSENCE**

STRATEGIC
LEVER 5

**DELIVERING
CONTEXTUALISED
RESPONSES**



FOSTERING A STRONG CULTURE OF BELONGING

RATIONALE

When students feel safe, known and valued, they are more likely to attend regularly. A culture of belonging boosts confidence, engagement and commitment to school life.



WHAT WE NEED TO DO

- ▶ Staff to use consistent 'belonging cues' - greetings, eye contact, affirming language
- ▶ Ensure every child is greeted daily by name and made to feel welcomed
- ▶ Embed a whole-school personal development strategy that ensures enrichment opportunities for all pupils
- ▶ Offer a range of accessible clubs, with all pupils encouraged to participate
- ▶ Use pupil voice to shape clubs, events and opportunities for wider personal development

ENSURING HIGH-QUALITY TEACHING AND PROVISION

RATIONALE

Students are more likely to attend where they feel safe, supported and able to succeed. High-quality provision that meets their learning needs motivates attendance and builds trust in the school.



WHAT WE NEED TO DO

- ▶ Maintain disruption-free classrooms through clear routines and expectations
- ▶ Ensure transitions are calm, supervised and consistent across the day
- ▶ Implement the EMAT *Empowering Excellence in Teaching* Pedagogical Framework and local teaching & learning policies with fidelity and consistency in every class
- ▶ Help students see the relevance and purpose of learning to increase motivation

BUILDING COLLECTIVE RESPONSIBILITY

RATIONALE

Sustainable improvements in attendance require shared ownership. Everyone - leaders, teachers, support staff and governors - must understand their role and be invested in the outcomes.



WHAT WE NEED TO DO

- ▶ Define clear attendance responsibilities for all roles
- ▶ Establish daily, weekly and termly routines to monitor and respond to attendance patterns
- ▶ Provide regular staff training and updates focused on practical attendance strategies
- ▶ Build a culture where attendance improvements are tracked, shared and celebrated

UNDERSTANDING THE ROOT CAUSES OF ABSENCE

RATIONALE

Codes alone do not tell the full story. Understanding the ‘why’ behind absence is essential to creating support that is timely, appropriate and effective.



WHAT WE NEED TO DO

- ▶ Use high-quality, real-time data to spot trends and patterns quickly
- ▶ Identify a trusted adult for every child with low attendance to explore reasons and offer support
- ▶ Hold structured conversations with pupils and families to identify barriers
- ▶ Develop collaborative action plans that respond to individual contexts
- ▶ Engage families in a non-judgemental way through consistent communication and support

DELIVERING CONTEXTUALISED RESPONSES

RATIONALE

Every child and family are different. Effective responses must be flexible, understanding and targeted, addressing the needs behind the behaviour.



WHAT WE NEED TO DO

- ▶ Design personalised intervention plans for students at risk of persistent absence
- ▶ Apply NHS guidance consistently and communicate when attendance is appropriate
- ▶ Promote part-time timetables or phased returns where suitable
- ▶ Make support for mental health visible, accessible and regularly reviewed
- ▶ Use the local offer to signpost families to additional help, including emotional and social support



CONCLUSION

This structured framework ensures each school within EMAT can act with clarity and confidence, building an attendance culture rooted in belonging, high expectations and tailored support.





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