

**A**ttendance (statutory)  
**C**hild employment and entertainment  
**E**lective home education and children missing education

# Initiatives to improve school attendance

A COMPILATION OF IDEAS FROM  
H&F COUNCIL AND INDIVIDUAL SCHOOLS



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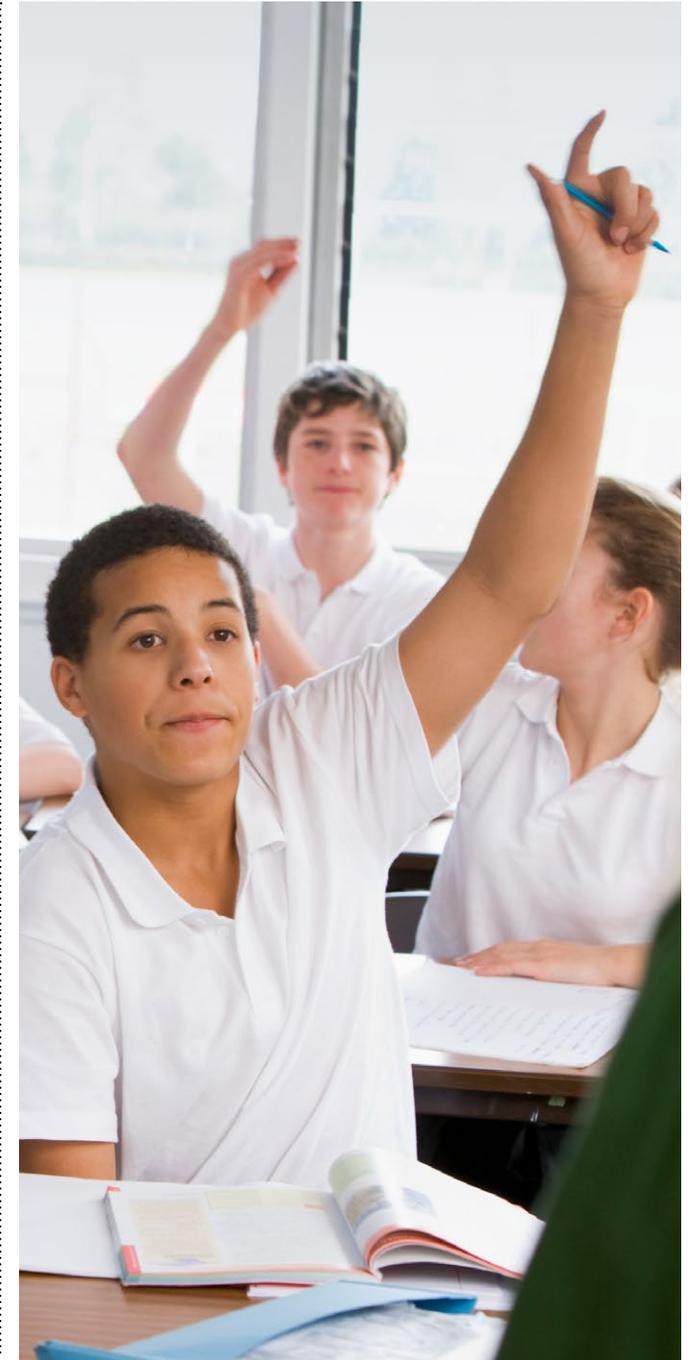
# Introduction

Regular attendance at school is an important factor in ensuring that children benefit from their education.

The Hammersmith & Fulham ACE\* team provide a [manual](#) online which contains information that schools can access to support regular attendance.

In addition, ACE have put together this online booklet which contains some initiatives and ideas for schools to consider, to help raise the profile of school attendance and support school staff with improving attendance.

\*Attendance (statutory), child employment and children in entertainment, elective home education, children missing education and permanent exclusions



# Robust school action plans in place to improve attendance

Schools are recommended to have clear and robust school action plans in place to tackle a pupil's unauthorised absence.

Example of a supporting school attendance action plan

Suggested timescale	Attendance profile	What needs to be done	Who by/who with
Day 1	Any absence without reason	First-day-of-absence contact	School Administrative Officer/Attendance Officer
Day 3	No response or concern about explanations	Letter from school to parent/carers	Any of the above and HOY, Head
Day 6 or further three days	No response or concern about explanations	Parents/carers to be invited to school meeting. Formal action plan to support attendance to be agreed, individual attendance targets to be included. Date set for further meeting to review plan.	Any of the above as well as any other relevant school staff, e.g. Learning Mentor, Attendance Officer, SENCO
Approximately six weeks (NB sooner if child completely absent)	Further unauthorised absence Attendance below 90 per cent	Meeting to review plan and agree a request for support from Family Support or referral to ACE team consideration of a penalty notice to be issued (if 85 per cent or below)	As above
Legal action	Further unauthorised absence	Family Support to consider initiating legal action or school staff to refer to ACE team for school-initiated prosecution (if attendance below 85 per cent, referral has not been made to Family Support to ACE team for a penalty notice).	Family Support/School staff/ACE

# Traffic light monitoring system

The 'traffic light system' can be used to track, monitor and plan actions to improve a pupil's attendance. The example provided suggests different actions that schools can take at different levels of attendance.

Example of a monitoring and planning system for improving school attendance

96-100%

**Attendance levels are good to excellent**

Positive encouragement/incentives/rewards required to maintain high levels of attendance.

93-95.9%

**Attendance levels beginning to cause concern**

Analyse data and provide reports to regularly monitor attendance/reasons for absence, patterns etc.

Letter from school staff warning parents of concern and advise that future absences not to be authorised unless medical evidence is provided.

90-92.9%

**Attendance levels causing more significant concern**

Parents invited to a meeting/attendance panel at school and Attendance Action Plan/contract agreed.

A date for plan/contract to be reviewed agreed at the meeting (three to four weeks), individual attendance target set.

Below 90%\* 85%\*\*

**Attendance decreased to an unacceptable level – below persistent absence rate – despite interventions by school staff**

\*Below 90% – refer to Family Support Services when complex issues identified.

\*\*Below 85% – refer to ACE for prosecution.

# Facts about poor attendance

Missing out on lessons leaves children vulnerable to falling behind. Children with poor attendance tend to achieve less in both primary and secondary school.

The Education (School Day and School Year) (England) Regulations 1999 require all maintained schools to open to educate their pupils for at least 190 days (380 sessions) in each school year.

Table 1 puts absence in the context of the days children miss at school based on a school being opened for 190 days per year and Table 2 puts absence in the context of the days children miss at school over a six week period.



Table 1

Number of days absence	Equals attendance one school year
9.5 days	95%
19 days	90%
28.5 days	85%
38 days	80%
47.5 days	75%
57 days	70%
66.5 days	65%

Table 2

Number of days absence	Attendance over past six weeks
2 days	93%
3 days	90%
5 days	83%
8 days	73%
10 days	67%
15 days	50%

# ACE leaflets

There are a range of information leaflets, on a variety of issues, available for parents/carers and schools to use that relate to a child's access to education or their welfare. The leaflets are available in the ACE reference manual, section 7. Ones relevant to attendance are also available here.

- [☞ ACE Reference Manual](#)
- [☞ Child protection in Hammersmith & Fulham schools – information for parents and carers](#)
- [☞ Do you know of a child who you believe is not receiving education?](#)
- [☞ Lateness – it does you no favours – information and advice for children](#)
- [☞ Minor sickness and school attendance – a guide for parents and carers](#)
- [☞ Attendance at nursery school](#)
- [☞ Penalty notices – fines for your child's non-attendance at school](#)
- [☞ Absence due to religious observance – information for parents and carers](#)
- [☞ School attendance – what parents and carers need to know](#)

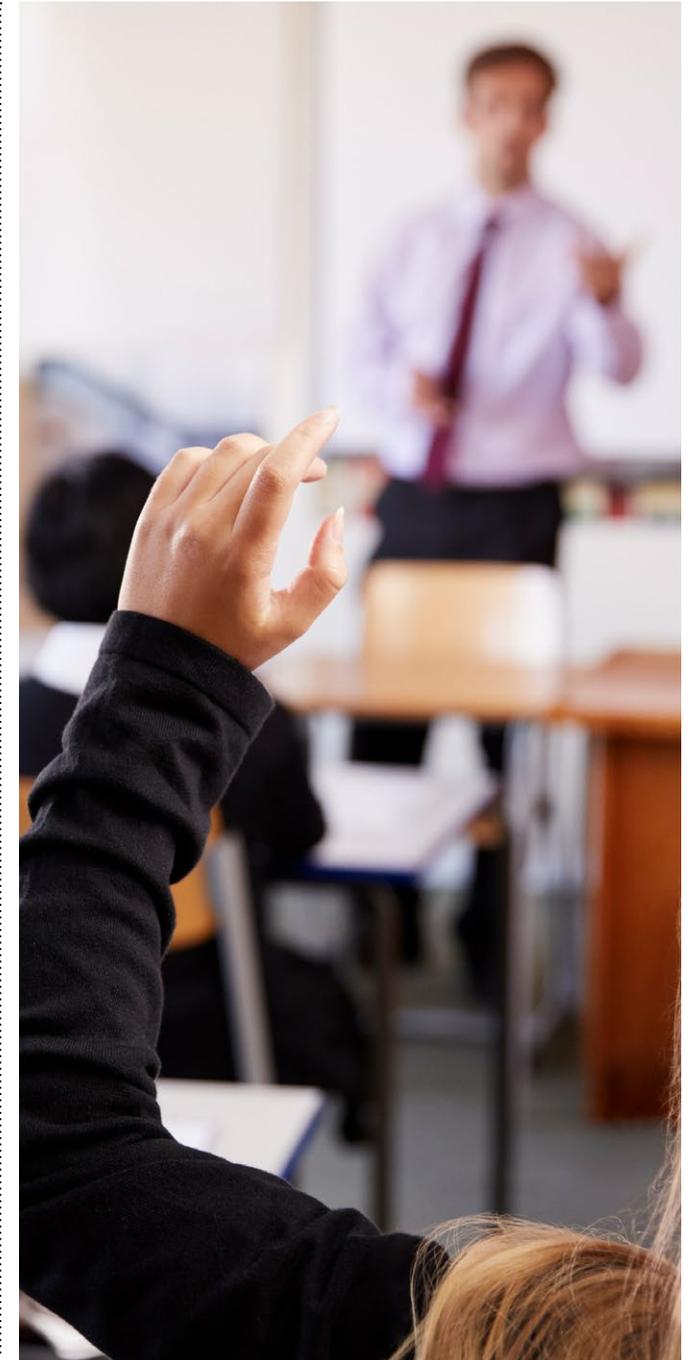


# Communication with parents

Regular communication with parents is crucial in raising the profile of school attendance and punctuality. Consideration could be given to using a variety of ways to convey the message.

Below are some examples that schools can consider:

- Notice boards
- Newsletters
- Letters home
- Texting
- Email
- School website
- Visual display unit
- Telephone calls
- Face to face discussions and meetings



# Parental involvement

Schools can consider various initiatives to raise the profile the importance of regular attendance amongst parents, ranging from simple positive communications sent home about a child's improved attendance to events/ activities at school with an attendance focus. For instance, presentations at parents' evenings, coffee mornings, drop ins (school nurse could be included) and workshops.

# Attendance contracts

Individual attendance contracts are a useful tool to improve attendance. The contracts are agreed between pupil/ parents/school staff to agree actions and set targets to improve a pupil's attendance. It is recommended that contracts are reviewed on a regular basis. Available in the ACE reference manual, section 1 (5):

[ACE Reference Manual](#)

## Example of an attendance contract template

**Date/time of meeting:**

**Venue:**

**Pupil name:**

**Date of birth:**

**Address:**

**School:**

**Present at meeting:**

**Action agreed:**

**Examples of action agreed:**

- Pupil will arrive at school by 8.30am every day.
- Parent will provide medical evidence for every sickness absence pupil may incur.
- Parent will inform the school on the first day of a sickness absence and provide a note upon pupil's return.
- Are any issues preventing pupil from attending regularly, school staff will be informed?

**Attendance target:**

**Timescale for improvement:**

**Date for review meeting:**

I confirm that this Attendance Action Plan was agreed by all present.

Signed:

**Parent/carer**

**Pupil**

**School representative**

**Other agency**

## Attendance panels

Schools can convene half-termly/termly attendance panel meetings for parents of pupils where attendance is a concern. Consideration could be given to the involvement of school governors in attendance panels.

Parents are invited into the school for the meeting and attendance targets for improvement can be set.

## Star chart

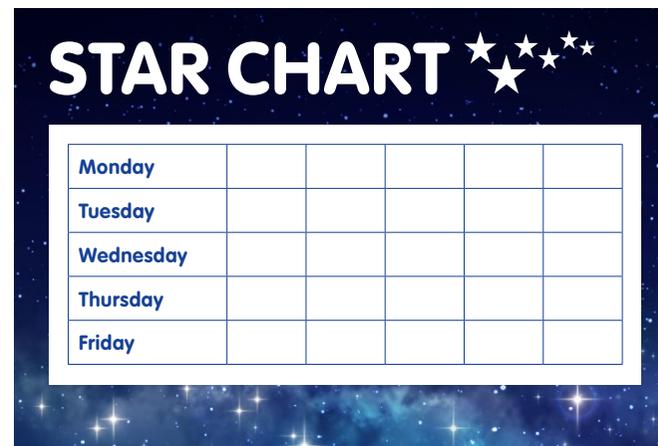
Star charts are a useful tool that can be given to parents to support/encourage a child's individual attendance.

The star chart can also be adapted as a whole class initiative that could be used as a weekly competition between classes.

The chart can be displayed in a prominent place, for instance, in the main hall. The class with the highest percentage of attendance becomes the 'star class'.

The 'star class' can be celebrated for instance in assembly, class treats etc. This initiative works well with primary school age children.

Example of a star chart



Monday					
Tuesday					
Wednesday					
Thursday					
Friday					

## Attendance information displays

Schools can use display boards or visual display units dedicated to attendance which can have a positive impact on raising the profile of attendance. The information can be placed in prominent positions within the school environment such as reception areas.

A visual display in a prominent place can include information about whole school attendance and details about attendance rates in a class/year group.

They can also contain information on expectations of parents and pupils regarding school attendance, information about where a parent can access support, information about Penalty Notices etc.

'Roll of honour' could also be displayed naming children with best attendance for the week etc.

Consideration can be given to involving children in maintaining the boards.

The importance of school attendance – a display in reception of the school



Group	% Attend
1 Jade Class	97.9%
1 Green Class	98.9%
2 Sapphire Class	92.9%
2 Blue Class	93.8%
3 Red Class	98.8%
3 Ruby Class	97.1%
4 Yellow Class	98.5%
4 Topaz Class	97.7%
5 Cream Class	98.9%
5 Pearl Class	94.9%
6 Orange Class	99.6%
6 Amber Class	96%
School average	96.6%



# Reward systems

Rewards are a popular initiative used by schools as an incentive to improve attendance and punctuality. They can be used for individual or whole school initiatives and work more effectively if age-specific.

Schools can use a variety of rewards as an incentive to improve attendance, for instance, stickers, treats, certificates, awards, badges etc.

The attendance of those children with 100 per cent attendance is often celebrated in assemblies.

Recognising and rewarding those children who have the most improved attendance can also act as an encouragement to promote even better school attendance.

Schools could consider a class outing or treats for individual children at the end of term/school year for those pupils/classes that have achieved the best attendance.

The attendance of those children with 100 per cent attendance is often celebrated in assemblies when rewards could be given out.

Example of a certificate of attendance



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# School attendance raffle

Each child who has 100 per cent attendance for a full week or term is given a raffle ticket and there is a draw in assembly. Prizes are awarded to the winners of the raffle.

# Attendance competitions

Schools can explore using competitions with prizes, for individual pupils and/or whole classes. For instance, some schools have attendance cups, Vivo points, individual and family prizes such as restaurant vouchers, cinema vouchers, individual/class treat, outings etc.



# Attendance displays

Attendance display boards are an exciting way to involve children in a weekly/termly attendance competition between classes. Schools can create colourful display boards, as illustrated below.

Each class is represented and the children can see which class is in the lead.

This initiative works particularly well with primary school children by keeping them involved, motivated and interested in school attendance. Schools can consider involving children in creating the attendance displays.

Example of an attendance board



# Attendance wall

An 'attendance wall' in the classroom can be used to display the names of children with good or improved attendance.

Example of attendance walls



# 100 Club

100 Club is for those children who have 100 per cent attendance for a specified period of time, for instance, half term or termly.

For those who achieve this they will receive a prize or a treat, for instance, a cinema trip, school disco, mufti day, restaurant trip.

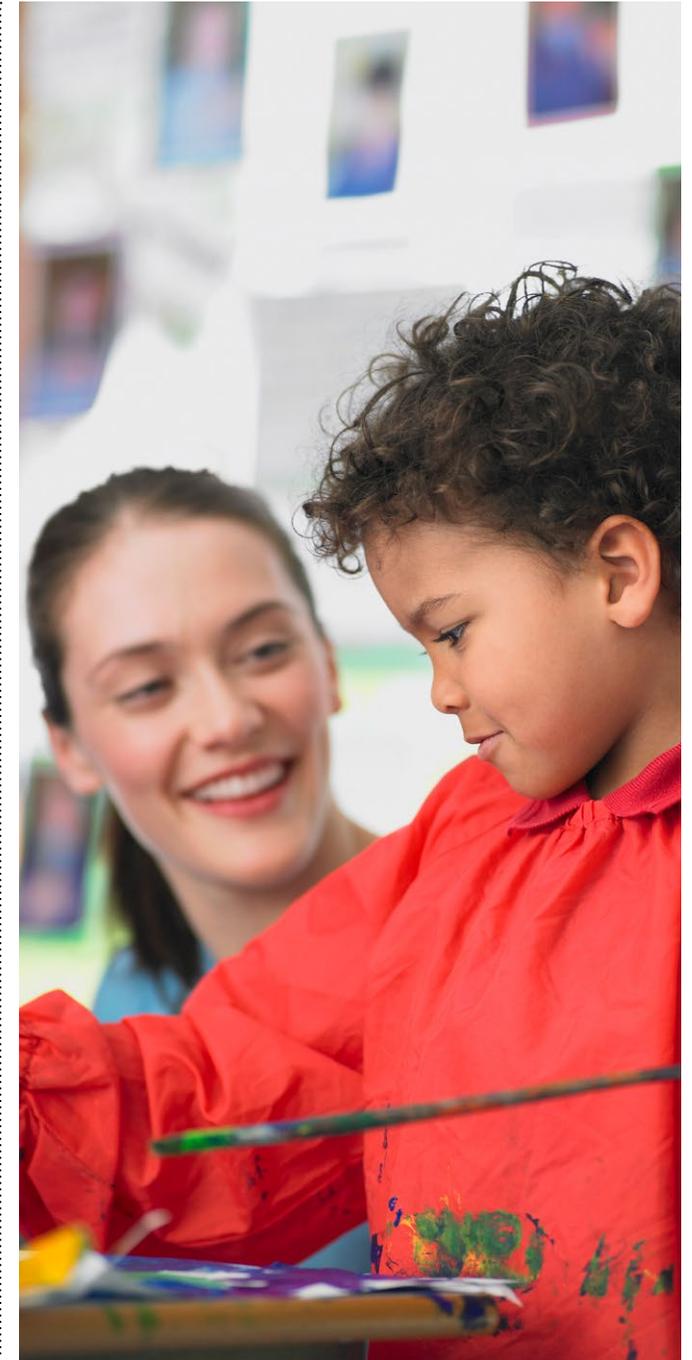


## School mascot

The child or class with best attendance can have the school mascot for a week. This initiative works well with primary age children.

## Attendance week

The 'Attendance week' initiative involves schools designating a whole week to focus on school attendance. The theme of school attendance could be integrated throughout different lessons/activities, i.e. 'a multi-layered' approach. For instance, art and design (design a poster), maths (eg attendance percentages, calculations relating to days missed etc), PSHE, assemblies.



# In to Win

*In to Win* is an initiative that has been widely used. It was devised with primary school children in mind.

It is an interactive game whereby children are encouraged to dress in a disguise (all provided) which may be a hat, false moustache, wig, feather boa, etc. They then have their photograph taken and this is put together on a computer programme that is run to music. When the music stops, the child whose picture appears on the large screen is the winner, if they have had 100 per cent attendance. This is often used in weekly attendance assemblies.

The initiative has been seen to have a great impact on school attendance.

Please click on the link below for more information.

[www.petergill.org.uk](http://www.petergill.org.uk)

A representative will visit your school to take a photograph of every child (about 10 minutes per class). The representative can provide fancy dress hats, wigs and glasses for the photographs (optional). You get your *In to Win* game and all the portraits (some schools like to use them for displays and on their websites).



# The Bank of Flora

One school in the borough has a super initiative to encourage good attendance and punctuality, they have built inside one of their classrooms a 'bank' and a 'shop' next door.

The idea is that the children 'earn money' as rewards for excellent attendance, punctuality and other things in school. The money is made by the children themselves, and laminated to have longer life. The children collect 'money' and 'bank' it in the bank, which is open at lunchtimes.

Their 'savings' are carefully recorded by other pupils, and when they have enough 'savings' they can spend these in the 'shop' next door which has a wide variety of items available for the children to purchase.



# Buddy system

This initiative encourages children to 'buddy up' with a child who has good attendance with one whose attendance is less than satisfactory, to try to encourage improved attendance.

# Lateness initiatives

## Red/yellow card

Schools can consider using a red/yellow card system as an initiative to improve punctuality.

Every late pupil is given coloured card depending on the time of their arrival at school. If a child has more than three red cards in a term parent invited to a meeting.

## Race to school

This can be an individual or whole class initiative where children who attend school punctually, on a weekly/half termly/termly basis etc., receive a sticker/treat.

Example of a lateness poster



