



Education  
Scotland  
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# Principles of Effective Tracking and Monitoring

August 2024

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First published August 2024.

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'The most purposeful use of data is to inform whole school developments to improve attendance and plan to meet individual children and young people's needs.'

[Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance](#)

# What is this?

Key principles to support consistent approaches to **tracking** and **monitoring** of attendance.

These materials should be used alongside resources in the [Improving attendance in Scotland](#) section on Education Scotland.

Three inter-dependent factors in ensuring a coherent approach to implementing change are shown in the diagram below. This paper focusses on systems and the processes aligned to these.

While systems and processes are important aspects of effective tracking and monitoring; understanding the data and using this effectively to identify early warning signs and implement well-planned support is crucial to improve attendance for learners.

This material would be of interest to local authority officers, senior leaders and practitioners in schools.

# Identification of trends

- Support analysis of 'actionable data' at whole school, cohorts, group and individual levels
- Identify history of absence and the causes of absence
- Highlight absence through a range of lenses e.g. types of absence, trends, groups, demographics
- Review data and implement processes consistently by all team members and across sectors – within schools, across school groups and across the local authority
- Analyse whole school data to inform universal supports e.g. timetable adjustments
- Provide high-level reporting at key points throughout the year including points of transition
- Systems which allow for filtering and intersecting of data sets to identify trends and patterns
- Identify trend going down, informing where improvement efforts should be focussed
- Filter attendance data to show trends and patterns of absence and to set meaningful targets at local authority and school level
- Compare data at the same point in the previous year to identify trends

- Analyse data at different points throughout the year, as set out below:

<b>Annual</b>	<b>Termly</b>	<b>Monthly/Weekly</b>	<b>Daily</b>
Review of trends*	Review of trends*	Whole school level data*	Review 'TBCs'
Primary and secondary transition including those at risk of not attending	Data that informs interventions required e.g. attendance, engagement, wellbeing	Review of data for identified groups and individuals Lateness	Reasons for absence Individual attendance and lateness
Previous year attendance for identified groups and individuals	Data that measures impact	Views of children, young people and families (groups/individuals as appropriate)	Truancy
Persistent absence	Persistent absence Lateness		
Views of children, young people and families (whole school)	Views of children, young people and families (groups/individuals as appropriate)		
*Possible trends to explore: patterns in days of the week, by SEEMiS codes, year groups and cohorts, individuals, particular times of the year, before and after holiday periods, below or near to agreed thresholds, sickness levels at given points in the year			

# Policy

- Ensure ALL absence is followed up in line with child protection purposes
- Local authority guidance in place to support attendance and managing absence
- Develop school level policy that promotes good attendance and outlines procedures to support the recording and management of attendance
- Record attendance at least twice a day
- Consistent use and application of absence codes within SEEMiS across all establishments
- Rigorous tracking and monitoring of all absences, clearly set out in attendance policies and procedures
- Ensure that all absences and late coming are accurately recorded by all
- Provide clear and accessible attendance data to encourage greater accountability and collaboration in promoting regular attendance
- Roles and responsibilities of all school staff are clearly outlined



# Early warning systems

- Use data to identify early warning signs – triggering support at an 'early' stage.
- Agree thresholds that can be used as a trigger for initiating support when further intervention is required; 90% attendance is an indicator that there will already be a negative impact on attainment.
- Ensure that data is monitored and considered for groups who are more likely to have barriers to attendance i.e. young carers, children and young people with additional support needs, those impacted by poverty.
- Support transitions at all levels - conversations and passing of information, ensuring that data for the prior year is considered in August.
- Regular analysis of data and trends to ensure early intervention and next steps are identified; this is essential to avoid lengthier absences which often require more complex interventions.
- Weekly review of school level and identified groups/individuals attendance.
- Identify young people at risk of leaving school early: can the 'pull' factors in school be strengthened or how can they be supported to transition to positive and sustained destinations.

# Improving outcomes

- Consider attendance data alongside wider tracking and monitoring information, including wellbeing assessments.
- Identify the 'vital few' causes of absence at local authority and school level and to develop, implement and monitor the impact of appropriate support.
- Intersect data to consider how attendance and timekeeping are impacting on attainment and achievement.
- Engagement: how engaged are the children and young people?
- Identify the 'pull' factors to school, giving consideration to trends on particular days.
- Use analysis of data to allocate resource or targeted intervention to support improved engagement, achievement and attainment.

# Promoting positive culture, ethos and relationships

- Ensure all stakeholders (pupils, parents, partners and the wider community) have a shared understanding of the importance of attendance, in easy to read and meaningful guidance i.e. short flyers/leaflets.
- Regular professional dialogue and reflection on improving attendance, informed by data.
- Strongly encourage full attendance in the first two weeks of the school year: those who don't attend are five times more likely to have 'chronic absence'.
- Careful planning of supports to improve attendance and timekeeping; ensuring that culture, ethos and positive relationships are at the core.
- High-quality conversations focused on improvement – between local authority officers and schools, within schools and between practitioners.
- Involve the learner and the family when identifying the 'root cause' and in developing support.