



Improving Attendance in Scotland: 2024-2026

Evidence, Impact and Actions for Consideration

March 2026

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Evidence, Impact and Actions for Consideration

Background

Post the Covid-19 pandemic there was a system-wide concern around reduced levels of school attendance. Accredited Official Statistics indicate that over the last two years there have been improvements in attendance. However, these statistics also show that attendance rates remain lower than the period prior to the pandemic (Scottish Government, 2025). Concerns also remain about a poverty-related gap, and high rates of persistent absence (Scottish Government, 2025). Evidence from numerous studies supports the notion that school absences have negative consequences for learners' academic achievement (Aucejo & Romano, 2016; Gottfried, 2010, 2011; Gottfried & Kirksey, 2017; Kirksey, 2019; Klein et al., 2022 cited in Dräger, Klein & Sosu, 2025).

In November 2023, Education Scotland (ES) published [‘Improving attendance: understanding the issues’](#) to support better understanding of the issues around attendance. This report is a follow up and provides an updated understanding of attendance and absences over the last two years, and the practice that is having a positive impact nationally, across local authorities and in educational establishments.

As part of the Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) ‘Framework for Progress and Recovery’, all local authorities now have local stretch aims to improve attendance. This reflects a collective, national focus on improving attendance, and this report is intended to further support this national improvement priority. It outlines successful strategies that have improved attendance and provides considerations for further improvement. These findings should be used by local authorities, schools and partner organisations when considering their approaches to further improve attendance and reduce absence. Actions for consideration are intended for Scottish Government, Education Scotland, local authorities, schools and relevant partners.

Process

This report was prepared by Education Scotland, with strong collaborative support from the Scottish Government's Health and Wellbeing, and Education Analytical services teams. Evidence was collated from 31 local authorities across Scotland on their local approaches. With the support of attainment advisors, 52 schools across 28 local authorities were sampled to gain local level understanding of strategies that are supporting improved attendance. Examples of practice from the ES 'Improving Attendance Quality Improvement Programme', previously published case studies and webinars have contributed to the evidence, informing high-level messages of what is working.

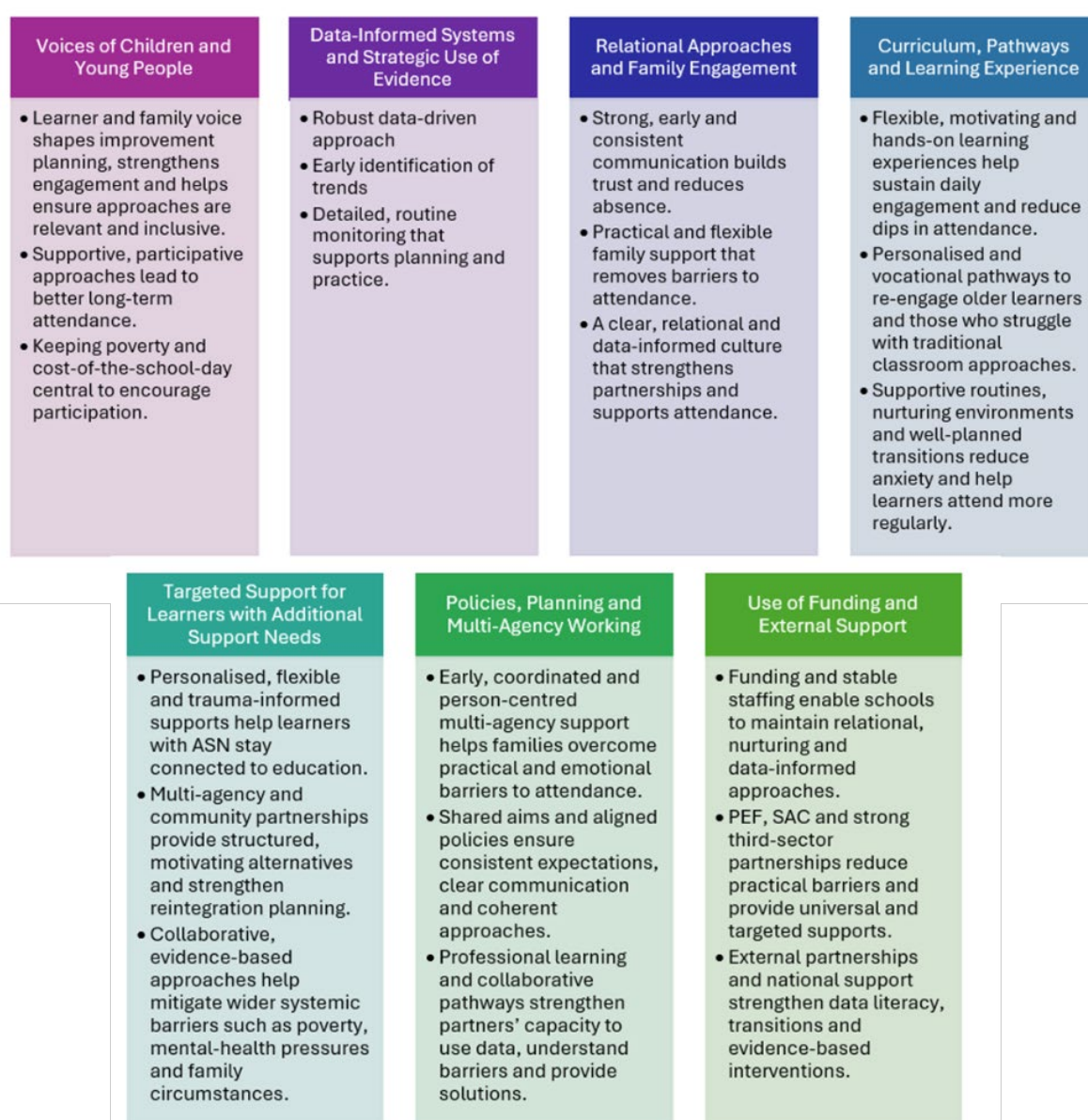
Analysis of the Accredited Official Statistics for attendance for the last two school sessions (2023-24 and 2024-25) has informed the data section of this report.

Key Findings

From the evidence gathered for this report, a wide range of successful approaches were identified. These approaches are examples, intended to support local authorities, schools and partners when considering how to further improve attendance and engagement. Absence is multi-faceted, so it is important that they are considered alongside a robust understanding of the local context.

These approaches have been categorised into seven key themes, which can be seen in the diagram below. Further detail within each theme can be found in appendix 1.

School level specific approaches have been collated and can be found in appendix 2.



Six key actions for consideration have been identified that will support further improvement in attendance moving forward:

1. Strengthen data use, consistency and live monitoring - Local authorities and schools should continue to enhance routine analysis, improve coding accuracy, expand access to live data and combine attendance with wellbeing/attainment insights to target early intervention effectively. Education Scotland should build upon work with schools and local authorities to strengthen data-led decision making.

2. Target support and communication to the learners and stages with greatest need - Scottish Government, Education Scotland, local authorities and educational establishments should use data to identify target groups/cohorts, patterns for boys vs girls, learners who have experienced care; tailor planning, messaging and resources accordingly.

3. Build sustainable capacity and strengthen professional learning- Consider long-term investment in key relational roles and expand staff learning on anxiety, Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), mental health, poverty and digital influences on attendance.

4. Deepen multi-agency collaboration for earlier, holistic support- Strengthen joint working with social work, health, Community Learning and Development, youth work and third-sector organisations to address complex barriers and provide coordinated, family centred intervention.

5. Enhance curriculum relevance, flexibility and transitions to improve engagement- Refine timetables, expand vocational and flexible pathways, strengthen transition supports and scale effective curriculum “pull factors” such as outdoor learning, nurture and practical experiences.

6. Further strengthen relational, non-judgemental engagement with families and communities - Prioritise clear expectations, supportive communication and meetings, cost of the school day mitigation and community partnerships to build trust and reduce practical and emotional barriers to attendance.

What does the national data tell us?

National attendance and absence data is collected annually and published in December for the previous academic year as Accredited Official Statistics. In addition, the Scottish Government collects and publishes fortnightly management information (MI) on school absences throughout the academic year. Changes introduced in January 2025 allowed MI data to be presented as cumulative, both across the fortnight and since the start of the school year. This fortnightly data and analysis enable the Scottish Government and Education Scotland to continue to monitor school pupil attendance in a timely manner to inform future action in this area of work. The fortnightly MI is shared back with all local authorities to support their work on improving attendance.

This section of the report focusses on key trends from both these sources of published attendance and absence data over the last two years.

Overall Attendance

The annual school attendance and absence statistics show 90.3% attendance in session 2023/24, an improvement of 0.1 percentage points (pp) from the previous year. For session 2024/25, attendance rates were 91%, an improvement of 0.7pp from the previous year. This remains below the pre-Covid-19 level of 93% in session 2018/19.

Attendance and Absence Patterns

Authorised absences in 2024/25 were 5.3%, a decrease compared to 5.9% in 2023/24, but higher than the pre-Covid-19 (2018/19) level of 4.4%. Unauthorised absence in 2024/25 was 3.7%, a slight decrease compared to 3.8% in 2023/24, but higher than the pre-Covid-19 (2018/19) level of 2.6%. Sickness (without education provision) continues to be the largest reason for absence, although the rate decreased from the previous year, from 4.8% of all possible openings in 2023/24, to 4.4% in 2024/25.

Attendance rates increased for both learners with and without an additional support need (ASN) compared to 2023/24. However, it increased more for learners with no ASN, therefore the gap has widened to 4.7pp compared to a gap of 4.6pp in 2023/24.

Attendance rates increased for both learners living in the 20% most deprived areas and for those in the 20% least deprived areas compared to 2023/24. However, attendance rates increased more for learners living in the 20% most deprived areas therefore the gap has narrowed to 6.5pp compared to a gap of 6.7pp in 2023/24.

Overall attendance data by sex indicates patterns are broadly stable. Boys in secondary schools recorded slightly higher attendance than girls (88.9% compared to 87.9% respectively). This trend is reversed in primary schools, where girls had slightly higher attendance, signalling that differences vary by sector rather than reflecting a single consistent pattern. However, when examining the data by stage, there are larger patterns of lower attendance for girls in S3, a gap of 1.6pp when comparing to the attendance of S3 boys. When broken down into 'reasons for absence', girls at S3 have higher absences for all reason categories except for temporary exclusion.

The largest differences were in the sickness without provision, unexplained absence, including truancy, and other authorised absences reason categories. Moving forward, further consideration needs to be given to the reasons behind this and possible solutions. Local authorities and schools, who have access to more detailed attendance data, should ensure that they have sufficiently sophisticated systems in place to analyse their data and identify trends to inform improvement.

Over the last two years, primary schools had the highest attendance rates, followed by secondary schools and then special schools. It should be noted that all three sectors increased their rates of attendance in session 2024/25, with the largest increase being recorded in secondary schools (0.8pp).

There are consistent patterns from both session 2023/24 and 2024/25, where attendance in primary one is the highest, then remains relatively stable until primary five. It subsequently starts to decline year on year until S3, which has the lowest attendance of all year groups. Attendance increases again, year on year, from S4 to S6.

In session 2023/24, 21 local authorities (LAs) had improved rates of attendance, ranging from 0.01pp to 0.83pp compared to 2022/23. Notably, in session 2024/25 all except one local authority had improved rates of attendance, ranging from 0.1pp to

2pp compared to 2023/24, demonstrating year on year improvements building progressively over time.

Whilst improvement was evident in 2023/24, the attendance rate for learners who were looked after within the last year had decreased from 84.4% in 2022/23 to 83.7% in 2023/24. Those who were looked after at home during 2023/24 had the lowest attendance rates across all accommodation types for looked after children. Moving forward, support to improve the attendance of these learners should be a priority.

The rate of persistent absence (percentage of learners who were absent 10% or more of all half day sessions), has decreased over the last two years, from 31.4% in 2023/24 to 28.5% in 2024/25. Persistent absences vary greatly across all stages of schooling, with the highest rates being in S3 in 2024/25 (bespoke analysis drawn from Accredited Official Statistics). Throughout all stages of primary school, boys have higher rates of persistent absence than girls. However, in secondary school, girls have higher rates of persistent absence across all stages. From S2 to S6, these are large differences ranging from 3.6pp to 4.8pp. More work is needed nationally, locally and at establishment level to understand the reasons for this.

A significant poverty-related persistent absence gap also remains, with 26.5pp between those living in quintile one versus those living in quintile five. Similarly, there is a significant additional support need (ASN)-related persistent absence gap, with 16pp between those with ASN versus those with no ASN.

In a few local authorities, there are individual schools who have significantly (up to 10pp or more difference) lower attendance than their local authority average. Strategic resources and support should focus on these establishments.

Lower attendance rates for particular groups would suggest that there should be a continued focus on targeted improvement at national, local and establishment levels. These groups include, but are not limited to, learners with ASN, those who are living in quintile one and those who have experienced care.

While variability in overall attendance is apparent across Scotland, a range of factors, including rates of deprivation and the numbers of learners with additional support needs, continues to have an impact on individual local authority results. Local authority comparisons require careful and cautious interpretation. Variations in context, especially where there are large numbers of learners living in quintile one,

mean that relative positions across Scotland may not fully capture the significant improvements achieved by some authorities. It is important to ensure a continued focus on improvement, informed by local data.

Following the national data summarised above, three additional questions were explored more fully to consider the potential impact upon attendance and to prompt further consideration.

1. Do holiday patterns have an impact on attendance?

Assumptions are often made about the impact of holiday patterns on attendance. This section looks at the data for the February half-term holiday, due to the variation in patterns across Scotland. This data is taken from the fortnightly MI.

February Half Term

Evidence taken from published fortnightly absence MI data (2024/25) suggests that attendance rates fluctuate in the period around the half term break in February.

Absence rates are higher in authorities that schedule only part of the week as the break or split the break across a weekend. In contrast, when authorities take a full week (or longer), absence rates show less fluctuation compared with the preceding and following fortnights. This suggests that authorities with a full-week February half term experience less disruption to attendance.

2. What trends can be seen in authorised and unauthorised family holidays?

The purpose of this analysis was to identify any patterns or trends across the 32 local authorities in relation to the rate of authorised and unauthorised family holidays. This analysis also helped to understand the extent to which family holidays might impact on overall attendance rates at local authority level.

Although the overall unauthorised absence rate has decreased since 2023/24, the rate of unauthorised holidays has increased slightly, from 1.0% of all openings in 2023/24 to 1.1% in 2024/25. This is the highest since the start of the time series in 2009/10.

Unauthorised family holidays

In 2024/25, rates of unauthorised family holidays across the 32 local authorities ranged from 0.7% to 1.5%. Three neighbouring local authorities accounted for the highest rates. Almost all local authorities showed an increase in unauthorised family

holidays from 2023/24 to 2024/25. The increases ranged from less than 0.01% to 0.18%.

In 2024/25, the rate of unauthorised family holidays ranged from 1.1% to 1.3% across the primary stages, with the highest rates in primary four and lowest rates in primary seven. Within secondary school stages, the rate ranged from 0.5% to 1.0%, with the highest rates in S2 and S3 and lowest in S6.

Authorised family holidays

In 2024/25, rates of authorised family holidays across the 32 local authorities ranged from 0.02% to 0.2%. A minority of local authorities showed an increase in authorised parental holidays from 2023/24 to 2024/25. The increases were small and ranged from less than 0.01% to 0.02%.

In 2024/25, the rate of authorised family holidays ranged from 0.08% to 0.09% across all primary stages. Within secondary schools, the rate ranged from 0.02% to 0.05% across stages, with the highest rates in S2 and lowest rates in S6.

Moving forward, schools and LAs could consider enhancing communication with families by targeting messaging around the impact of term-time holidays for stages with consistently higher absence rates. It may also be helpful to utilise data to analyse patterns and underlying factors influencing term-time holiday requests to understand local context.

3. Do Friday early school closures impact attendance?

Attendance data was considered to explore this question in greater depth, examine any potential impact on attendance and support further analysis. This data was drawn from locally collected management data provided by three authorities who assisted in the analysis of this area. It was shared as illustrative examples to inform consideration of the question, rather than as formally assured statistical evidence.

Across Scotland, some secondary schools close earlier on a Friday than other days as part of an asymmetric week, while others continue with a standard full-day timetable. There is no single national pattern, and Friday hours vary between local areas and even between neighbouring schools in the same authority. To explore whether early closures make any difference to attendance, sample evidence was gathered from three local authorities implementing different Friday structures.

- Local authority A includes schools that finish early on Fridays and others running a full day. This authority covers a large area that includes both towns and rural communities, and its schools serve learners from a wide range of socioeconomic backgrounds. Across all its secondary schools, Friday attendance is consistently lower than on Monday to Thursday. In term one of academic session 2024/25, Friday attendance was lower in schools with early closures; in the first term of 2025/26, the reverse occurred, and early-closure schools recorded stronger Friday attendance than those operating full days. This happened despite no new authority-wide approaches to attendance being introduced during that period. These year-to-year changes suggest that factors other than early closing are likely to be influencing attendance.
- Local authority B operates a uniform model: all secondary schools finish at lunchtime on Fridays. Geographically, this is a compact authority, with schools situated close to each other and a growing population. Attendance data across several years shows a consistent pattern: Fridays record a small but steady dip in attendance compared with the rest of the week. The drop is not dramatic, but it is persistent and appears unrelated to changes in school structures or policy.

Local authority C takes a different approach: all its secondary schools run a full day on Fridays. This authority spans a large geographical area, including multiple islands. As a result, travel arrangements, weather conditions, ferry timetables and local community routines can all influence attendance. In most of the schools, Fridays have the highest absence levels of the week. In some schools, Friday absences rise sharply compared with other days, suggesting that local circumstances play a significant role.

Overall, across these three authorities, there is no clear evidence that early Friday closures either improve or worsen attendance. Patterns vary, and changes from year to year appear to be influenced more by local context, culture, behaviour and wider community factors than by the structure of the school day itself. It would be helpful, for analysis purposes, for more authorities to gather and compare similar data over time. Schools may also benefit from exploring the specific cultural or behavioural

reasons why Fridays can be more challenging for some groups of learners, regardless of whether the school day ends early or not.

Local authority evidence

Based on responses from local authority engagement, evidence has been collated into five overarching questions, focussing on strategic approaches, trends and impact.

How are policies and strategic plans being used to improve attendance?

Across local authorities, attendance policies have undergone a significant refresh in the last two years, reflecting a clear focus on improving attendance and aligning with local authority stretch aims. Most updates to policies have taken place during 2024–2025 and for some, further revisions are planned for 2026. A clear pattern is evident where policies increasingly align with national guidance and Getting it Right for Every Child (GIRFEC) principles. They also include guidance on the application of Scottish Educational Management Information System (SEEMiS) coding and greater consistency in definitions and processes. There is some evidence of a collaborative and consultative approach, with policies co-designed with school leaders, partners and stakeholders, often launched through seminars or summit events.

Almost all local authorities have a strategic plan, either in place or in development, to improve attendance. The majority of these plans are part of wider whole local authority education plans, indicating the important interconnections between attendance and improving attainment, achievement and health and wellbeing.

Almost all local authorities have communication approaches in place to target parents and/or learners. These approaches include:

- School/area specific approaches where data has identified the need for targeted messaging around improving attendance
- Standard approaches to communication such as letters and text messages
- Use of the support materials published by Scottish Government for the National Attendance Campaign
- Local authority level campaigns including social media, radio and posters

Due to the range of improvement work taking place in relation to attendance, it has been difficult to attribute any impact directly to communication and campaigns at a local level. However, there is strong evidence that attendance data is being used to both inform and review communication approaches. Moving forward, local authorities should consider further targeting of any campaigns and communication towards the greatest need, including S3 girls, term time holidays in primary schools, and any other factors that are exposed through an understanding of local data.

In addition to communication strategies and campaigns, almost all local authorities have developed strategic approaches to support families and communities to improve attendance. There is a clear emphasis on the importance of strong multi-agency partnerships; bringing together education, social work, health, community learning and development (CLD) and third-sector organisations, to provide coordinated, early support for families. There is recognition of the importance of professional learning for staff, including educational psychologist led training and authority wide programmes, to build confidence in addressing barriers to attendance. As a next step, there is scope to widen professional learning programmes, ensuring that wider partners are included. This will further strengthen partnership working and planning.

Strategies to support families and communities are most effective where local authorities know their own context well and adapt their plans accordingly. Some examples include dedicated family support roles, clear attendance frameworks, and data driven tools such as dashboards and attendance forums. This would suggest that strengthening systems around consistent policy, real-time data and specialist knowledge enables earlier, more precise support for families. Likewise, using central referral pathways, family hubs and staged intervention processes demonstrate the value of simple, yet coordinated structures that can ensure timely, joined-up support for families.

Most local authorities have strong partnership approaches in place to support shared aims around attendance and engagement, with schools often working routinely alongside CLD teams, youth work services and a range of third-sector organisations to address barriers for learners and families. Where evidence highlighted multi-agency collaboration, success depended on a shared contribution to planning, early intervention and coordinated support pathways.

Evidence indicates that partnership input increasingly informs policy development, transition support, and targeted interventions for specific cohorts, such as those affected by poverty, care experience, anxiety or disengagement. Strategic frameworks such as local Children's Services plans or community planning structures are further aligning partners around shared attendance aims. However, challenges remain, including variable youth-work capacity, difficulties engaging specific partners (often due to workload pressures), or the need to reduce duplication and strengthen consistency across agencies.

How is attendance data monitored, and what systems support this?

Almost all authorities have established systems in place, typically dashboards, SEEMiS-linked trackers, and regular data-driven reporting cycles, that provide timely, detailed attendance information. These systems are resulting in early identification, targeted intervention, and more consistent data practices, contributing to more responsive planning and improved or stabilised attendance trends.

Example A – Data driving targeted action

The local authority uses a live Power Business Intelligence (BI) dashboard integrated with SEEMiS, giving schools and central teams immediate access to attendance trends and risk profiles. This visibility helps them to pinpoint individuals and small cohorts (e.g., care-experienced, Free School Meals (FSM) eligible, Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) groups) and to direct targeted support and Quality Assurance visits, leading to clearer decision-making and improved attendance over the past three years, particularly for priority groups.

Example B – Systematic monitoring to improve attendance

The local authority monitors attendance through a weekly-updated Power BI dashboard accessed by all headteachers. Regular analysis informs intervention planning, allowing timely discussion of trends and follow-up actions. Leaders report that this systematic, shared approach has played a key role in stopping a declining attendance trend and supporting improvements across sectors.

As well as central systems, most local authorities have established systems available at school level. These support monitoring of live attendance data, with SEEMiS and Power BI dashboards forming the core tools for daily, weekly and termly tracking. There is evidence of clearer SEEMiS coding guidance, structured reporting cycles

and explicit expectations for routine analysis, although there is scope to ensure further consistency in both systems and processes across all schools.

Several authorities have invested in professional learning to strengthen staff data literacy so they can interpret patterns and trends with greater confidence. A number have introduced additional tools to support tracking, the earlier identification of attendance trends and more holistic analysis across cohorts. Across almost all, the use of live dashboards combined with regular review processes is enabling schools to spot emerging patterns, to identify small cohorts requiring support, and to plan timely, evidence-based interventions, supported through quality assurance visits and challenge from central officers.

Guidance for schools in the use and application of SEEMiS coding has been a priority in most local authorities. As a result, there is increased confidence that attendance and absence is recorded consistently within schools. Where there is the strongest impact, there is recognition that while consistent coding improves the quality of the data, processes need to be in place which inform improvement. Examples of these include professional learning to understand the data, self-evaluation toolkits to support deeper understanding of barriers to attendance, and cross-sector working groups. Effective recording of attendance and absence continues to be an ongoing, iterative process for most local authorities.

What targeted support is in place, and what trends are emerging?

Local authorities continue to use local systems to identify the groups or cohorts where attendance is a particular concern. Those identified are broadly in line with those recognised through national data analysis, although data analysis at local level highlights some additional groups. These include, but are not limited to:

- Learners affected by poverty (measured differently in some authorities) and/or domestic circumstances
- Learners who have experienced care
- Learners in transition from primary seven into S1
- Learners with additional support needs, particularly those who attend special provision
- Specific cohorts in secondary schools (S2, S3, S4, S5 leavers)

- Learners with attendance related anxiety, emotional based school avoidance (EBSA) and mental health issues
- Those taking family holidays during term time, including extended holidays to visit family abroad
- Learners in rural locations
- Specific cohorts in primary schools (P5, P6)
- White Scottish males, particularly in areas of socio-economic disadvantage
- Gypsy Travellers
- Young Carers

Learners who have multiple intersecting characteristics are often at compounded risk of low attendance. Moving forward, it is important for local authorities to continue to interpret their own data and to recognise their context, to inform planning for improvement.

Most local authorities have observed an increase in parental requests to have 'flexible' arrangements put in place for their child/young person. This includes adapted timetables, 'flexi-schooling' and home education. Often these requests are to support either an identified additional support need or wellbeing need.

Arrangements to deal with these requests vary across all local authorities.

Consideration should be given to updating local level advice and guidance in line with the refreshed 'Included, Engaged and Involved 1'.

What strategic approaches are having an impact, and what challenges remain?

There is no single intervention identified as universally impactful, reflecting the multi-faceted challenges in improving attendance. However consistent high-level themes are clear:

- Strategic focus and leadership
 - a relentless strategic focus on attendance, driven by senior leaders, headteacher forums and central teams.
 - consistent messaging and making attendance a standing agenda item at leadership meetings, ensuring strengthened collective responsibility.

- Improved access to data and increased data literacy
 - Better access to data, such as Power BI dashboards, pupil tracking tools, and more accurate SEEMiS coding, to support improved early identification and targeted intervention.
 - Improved data literacy across schools to enable more sophisticated professional discussions and evidence-informed decisions.
- Clearer policies and consistent systems
 - Revision or introduction of attendance policies, guidance, and operational procedures to improve consistency and expectations across schools.
 - Attendance forums, updated coding guidance, and structured monitoring approaches to strengthen practice.
- Targeted family support and relational, wellbeing-focused approaches
 - Targeted support roles (e.g. engagement officers, family support workers), relational approaches and flexible pathways for learners who experience barriers to attendance.
 - Trauma-informed or nurturing approaches to improve engagement for specific cohorts.
 - Specific practical interventions such as walking buses or curriculum redesigns.
- Collaboration, networks, and multi-agency support
 - Partnership working, both multi-agency and through regional/national programmes to strengthened consistency and provided valuable challenge and support.

There is a clear focus on using attendance data to demonstrate the impact of local interventions, highlighting year-on-year improvements, gains for targeted groups and individuals, or reductions in unauthorised absence. Qualitative feedback from learners, families and staff reinforce positive change in attendance, improved engagement or wellbeing. As a result, local authorities note system level improvements, including more consistent practice across schools and an increase in confident, data-informed professional dialogue.

While the root causes of absence are wide ranging, there is strong evidence that increased numbers of learners with an additional support need continues to be the most persistent and difficult challenges in improving attendance. There is a widespread perception that parental attitudes have shifted post-pandemic, with increased parental caution about illness and/or greater acceptance of keeping their child at home. It is important that there is a continued focus on working with parents to ensure understanding of the barriers faced in getting their child to school, while also conveying messages about the positive benefits of attendance.

Strategically, there are concerns about capacity, partly due to increasing levels of needs, in particular parents and/or learners with mental health concerns or anxiety. As a result, making multi-agency work and sustained relational support more difficult. Challenges are also identified with accurate SEEMiS coding, inconsistent use of part-time timetables, and the time required to build staff data literacy.

Stronger multi-agency collaboration, more holistic community-based family support, and clearer, consistent messaging to parents and learners are viewed as essential to further improving attendance. Concerns persist about term-time holidays and absence coding, though consistent coding alone will not improve attendance. Secure staffing, particularly permanent family support roles and dedicated attendance officers, is highlighted as critical for early, relational, and sustained intervention, but is challenging in the current financial climate. Universal access to data systems with real-time or advanced functionality remains an ongoing issue. Strengthening curricular relevance, flexible pathways, and smoother transitions, especially into secondary, are also seen as important. It will be important to incorporate such considerations into the development of the Curriculum Improvement Cycle.

What external support and funding are being used to strengthen attendance?

Almost all local authorities use Scottish Attainment Challenge funding to support attendance through a variety of interventions, such as family-facing support, wellbeing and nurture, re-engagement/alternative learning offers, enhancing data capacity, breakfast clubs and the development of professional learning.

These interventions are most effective where they wrap family support, targeted interventions, and data-led decision making around identified cohorts, with clear

tracking of outcomes and a plan for long-term sustainability beyond short-term funding cycles.

There is strong evidence of engagement with Education Scotland professional learning, support and the published resources for improving attendance. In many instances, attainment advisors have provided challenge, coaching and regular data focused dialogue. This support has led to strengthened local approaches. Where authorities have participated in the 'Improving Attendance National Quality Improvement Programme', helping schools apply improvement methodology and small tests of change, this has resulted in improved attendance for identified groups. Central officers who have attended the National Attendance Network, facilitated by Education Scotland, highlighted valuable opportunities for wider collaboration and sharing of practice.

Local authorities stress that sustained funding, stronger data capability (systems and data-literacy), Education Scotland support, and consistent strategic leadership are key to maintaining momentum. This needs to be underpinned by inclusive, wellbeing-led practice and clearer national guidance, especially on Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).

School level evidence

The school-level examples are based on responses from engagements with 52 individual schools, identified by attainment advisors and local authorities as demonstrating a positive improvement journey in attendance. A more detailed explanation of each school's effective universal and targeted approaches is provided in appendix 2. This includes information on the school roll, SIMD profile and its urban/rural classification.

How is attendance data being used in schools?

Most establishments report year on year improvement, with many seeing small but consistent gains across cohorts. Some note clear strengths in restoring attendance to, or beyond, pre-pandemic levels, demonstrating important strengths in sustained recovery. However, persistent absence, unauthorised holidays and anxiety related non-attendance remain recurring challenges, often intersecting with other factors such as poverty, mental health or complex needs. A few settings show areas where

progress is slower or uneven, particularly for those with ASN, FSM or specific year groups. Overall, the pattern suggests encouraging signs of improvement, albeit with some aspects requiring further focused attention.

Common universal strategies include nurturing, relationship centred practice, predictable routines and clear communication with families. Soft starts, breakfast clubs and uniform or cost related support reduce financial and practical barriers for many learners and represent notable strengths in removing obstacles to attendance. Staff training in trauma informed or nurturing approaches strengthens the environment further. Clubs, outdoor learning and leadership opportunities enhance the “pull” to school. Many schools describe consistent messaging and visible leadership as strong features of their approach, showing important strengths in whole-school culture.

Targeted strategies typically centre on personalised, relationship-based interventions. These include key adult support, staged intervention meetings, home visits, tailored morning routines, and multi-agency planning, particularly for learners facing complex needs. Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) specific responses—such as phased returns, safe spaces or flexible timetables—are especially significant and in some settings demonstrate major strengths in meeting individual needs. Additional Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) funded roles and specialist partners (e.g. youth work, counselling, wellbeing practitioners) offer valuable targeted support. Vocational pathways and adapted timetables help re-engage older learners where traditional models have not met their needs. Schools might consider using attendance data more deliberately to refine universal, culture-building approaches and to strengthen targeted, relationship-based supports that reduce barriers and improve engagement. Analysis should be used to better tailor interventions for vulnerable groups, inform multi-agency planning, and adapt pathways or timetables so provision more precisely meets individual needs.

Monitoring is generally structured and frequent, drawing on SEEMiS data, custom dashboards, Red Amber Green (RAG) style tracking, and pastoral discussions. Many schools' triangulate attendance with wellbeing, attainment and staff observations, adjusting interventions as patterns emerge, reflecting effective and well-embedded practice. Pre/post measures (using, for example, wellbeing webs, Boxall Profiles, or

the Leuven Scales of Wellbeing and Involvement) help to evaluate nurture-based interventions. Some establishments would benefit from strengthening cohort level analysis, particularly for groups with persistent absence, signalling areas where further improvement is required, but most show clear routines for reviewing the impact of actions over time.

Schools use data to identify patterns such as day specific dips, persistent absence, lateness, and disparities linked to SIMD, ASN or cohort profiles. Regular reviews, coding checks and “first day anomaly” alerts enable swift follow up and represent important strengths in early intervention. Teachers and pastoral staff receive updated information to support early conversations with families. In several settings, data supports short improvement cycles, helping to refine approaches and target interventions precisely. Moving forward, schools should further develop their processes for data to inform improvement.

What impact is the curriculum having on attendance and engagement?

Curricular adaptation commonly includes outdoor learning, play pedagogy in early years, nurture bases, and high interest thematic programmes. Many primaries use practical, hands-on experiences to maintain engagement, while secondaries offer vocational courses, National Progression Awards (NPAs), apprenticeships and flexible pathways. Some timetables are adjusted to emphasise motivating subjects or to reduce transitions for anxious learners, demonstrating clear strengths in making learning more accessible. These changes often provide meaningful and relevant routes back into learning for learners at risk of disengagement and in some settings reflect very effective use of curriculum flexibility.

Most establishments enhance transitions through early information sharing, personalised plans and gradual familiarisation. Nursery to primary one transitions often use play-based approaches, buddy systems and soft starts. Primary seven to S1 transitions include extended visits, risk matrices, pastoral contact and targeted supports for vulnerable learners, including those who are experiencing care. Some secondaries provide immersive transition weeks or supported travel familiarisation. These approaches help to reduce anxiety and promote continuity, showing important strengths in supporting learners at key points of change.

Many schools maintain purposeful learning up to the final day of the term, organising engaging activities to discourage early absence due to pending holidays. Others adjust assessment windows, activity days or showcase events to improve attendance patterns, reflecting effective use of planning to mitigate dips. Messaging around medical appointments and avoiding term time holidays also plays a role. Some establishments modify the timing of trips or celebratory events to strengthen attendance in the lead up to breaks, which in some contexts has emerged as a notable strength.

Learners are involved through pupil councils, surveys, focus groups and leadership roles. Many schools encourage learners to help design attendance incentives, clubs, or whole school events. In targeted plans, learners set personal goals and reflect on progress with key adults, showing strengths in pupil partnership. Secondary learners often contribute through mentoring or structured tutor time conversations. While some establishments involve learners mainly at individual level, others are increasingly using learner voice to shape whole school culture, representing positive emerging practice in meaningful participation.

In line with the Curriculum Improvement Cycle, schools might consider using attendance and engagement information to evaluate which curriculum adaptations have the strongest impact for different learners (e.g. outdoor learning, practical experiences, vocational pathways and reduced transition structures). Schools may also wish to involve learners more directly in shaping themes, pathways, clubs, incentives and transition activities so that the curriculum reflects what motivates them and supports the wider national programme to evolve curriculum practice by 2028.

How are schools working with families and communities?

Establishments reported that strong, trusting and non-judgemental relationships with families are central to improving attendance. Meeting families “where they are” and clearly communicating the link between attendance and attainment helps shift parental behaviours and expectations. Reducing financial/practical barriers (e.g. uniform, transport, cost of the school day) was noted as a frequently used strategy to improve attendance. Flexible timetables, ‘Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible and Included’ (SHANARRI)-based adjustments, use of engagement data, understanding individual contexts and home visits were viewed as

the most effective personalised approaches. Multi-agency work with health, social work, educational psychology and third-sector organisations was especially effective for families facing complex needs such as mental health, poverty or parenting challenges. Overall, relational, practical and personalised support is considered largely effective for families and should be a key element of all strategies to improve attendance.

The overall picture shows persistent and indeed intersecting attendance challenges linked to poverty, ASN, care-experience, parent and learner mental health and term-time holidays. Pressure points were noted in upper primary (P6-7), early secondary (S2–S3 - most notably in the afternoons) and key transition stages. Establishments reported that Mondays and Fridays often have lower attendance rates. Ensuring targeted, relational and multi-agency approaches to address these ongoing concerns is important for all schools. Differences were noted between boys and girls in multiple establishments, with reports that boys' attendance was lower overall in some establishments, while S3–S4 girls show lower attendance in other establishments, often linked to anxiety and wellbeing factors. Moving forward, it is important that schools look to further understand the barriers for girls, working with them to identify solutions and support.

Illness and health-related concerns were the most common causes of absence. Anxiety, mental health difficulties, EBSA and term-time holidays also feature prominently. Socioeconomic pressures (for example poverty, cost of the school day) and practical barriers (for example transport, geography) were said to influence attendance. Neurodiversity and Additional Support Needs related challenges were also common causes of non-attendance. Social dynamics and peer relationships between learners were reported as causes of absence (for example bullying and fear arising from social media incidents). Parental influence, non-engagement and home factors were also identifiable as causes of absence.

Next steps could include the strengthening of early and co-ordinated work with families and partners to address pressures such as anxiety, EBSA, mental health needs, socioeconomic constraints, transport issues and peer or online concerns. Further priorities could include enhancing supportive communication and practical

assistance so families can respond earlier to worries, reduce inconsistent routines and work collaboratively to resolve emerging attendance issues.

How are policies and plans supporting school attendance?

Establishments mostly rely on local authority attendance policies rather than creating their own standalone versions. Where standalone policies do exist, they appear to align with local authority guidance. Regarding the frequency with which policies are reviewed, it was reported that some establishments do so annually, while some do so every two to three years, while some had not reviewed for several years.

Consideration should be given by all schools to ensuring they have an up-to-date policy, taking account of their own context.

Establishments aim to strengthen early intervention via more accurate tracking and monitoring, especially for learners with persistent absence (<90% attendance), free school meal (FSM) entitlement and those with additional support needs, anxiety or who have experienced care. There is a move toward enhanced data use, including Power BI, attendance trackers and SEEMiS. Improved family engagement including flexible meetings, home visits and use of family hubs were priorities.

Establishments emphasised that acting on learner voice and implementing more engaging and relevant curriculum pathways (especially in upper stages) are key to improving attendance. One establishment mentioned that curriculum approaches must increase the “magic, wonder and belonging” that learners experience (primary school). Multi-agency partnerships continued to be widely noted as a strategy for improvement as did the need for the improvement of systems and policies regarding attendance, lateness and unauthorised absence.

Consideration should be given to strengthening early intervention through clearer tracking, integrated data use and more flexible family engagement so policies better identify risk and remove barriers for vulnerable learners. Reinforcing multi-agency planning and stabilising support roles will ensure families with complex needs receive consistent, coordinated help that improves attendance.

Schools highlighted the importance of strengthened support for vulnerable families, including access to mental-health services, practical assistance and approaches that help build positive family relationships. Improved access to multi-agency services

was viewed as essential in helping address complex needs and supporting better attendance. The most consistent message from establishments was the importance of increased capacity in roles that directly support attendance, such as family link workers, guidance staff and pupil support assistants.

Several establishments emphasised that greater curriculum flexibility for interrupted learners could help those who are persistently absent or experiencing anxiety. Schools also noted that more streamlined data tools, clearer processes and reduced administrative demands would support earlier and more targeted attendance interventions. Schools expressed concerns in planning for sustainability.

What funding and external support are schools using to improve attendance?

Scottish Attainment Challenge (SAC) funding and Pupil Equity Funding (PEF) were described as essential for sustaining and improving attendance - primarily through relational, preventative and targeted staffing and interventions. Common posts included leadership roles, family link workers, youth workers, nurture/wellbeing staff and support assistants. SAC funding and PEF also support breakfast clubs and soft starts, outdoor learning, nurture, wellbeing programmes as well as reducing financial barriers (including clothing, transport, equipment). Partnerships with organisations such as children's charities, community organisations, football trusts and employability services strengthen family engagement and youth activity. A few establishments however, report not using SAC funding or PEF specifically for attendance.

It will be important to review how SAC and PEF funding, alongside external partnerships, might be used even more strategically to reduce financial barriers and strengthen the relational and practical supports that contribute to improved attendance.

Engagement with Education Scotland varies, some establishments receive extensive support whilst others engage less because attendance is already strong or support is not deemed necessary. Where used, Education Scotland's influence and support is deemed positive with mention of improved use of data and systems leading to more targeted and impactful interventions. Establishments report meaningful and regular engagement with attainment advisors (AAs) as well as the use of Education Scotland

attendance resources. Participation in Education Scotland's quality improvement (QI) programme and regional improvement collaboratives (RIC) attendance networks were particularly valued for improving use of measurement tools and refining attendance interventions.

Is there an increase in parental requests for 'flexible arrangements'?

Most establishments have not experienced a major rise in flexi-schooling requests, though a minority noted a gradual increase since COVID-19. A more noticeable rise has occurred in home-educating rather than flexi-schooling, often linked to mental health or anxiety. Establishments are increasingly using adapted pathways such as outreach programmes, home tuition, in-house flexible packages and partner programmes (for example, skills academies).

Key Messages from schools

Establishments emphasised a sustained commitment to improving attendance that is grounded in a positive culture, relational practice and data-informed approaches. In establishments where attendance is improving, it appears to be part of a whole school ethos where values are "lived and embedded" (cited by one primary school). Staff request more professional learning on complex social issues that influence absence and greater opportunities for expert collaboration.

High quality learning experiences, nurturing and inclusive environments and leadership opportunities are noted as vital to support strong attendance.

Establishments also identified challenges such as holiday scheduling and "short week" effects which may be detrimental to attendance. Finally, some establishments noted a positive shift in authority-level support and communication, with greater emphasis on consistent messaging, media campaigns and transparency with families. This has strengthened shared understanding of attendance expectations and reinforced collective responsibility for improvement.

How Can Schools Strengthen Engagement and Support for Potential S4 Leavers?

In addition to the responses analysed from schools, pilot work was undertaken with a focus on S4 leavers and how to support strengthened engagement and positive destinations. This work had two strands; one being gathering practice from secondary schools which resulted in published videos and the second being coordinated support with a group of secondary schools in one local authority. The evidence from both strands of the pilot illustrates how early identification, flexible curriculum design and strong relationships support learners at risk of leaving school at the end of S4. Across the schools involved, staff used robust data systems, pastoral information and multi-agency insights to identify risk early, often from S2 or S3, and monitor engagement closely through live tracking of attendance, behaviour and aspirations. This enabled timely, targeted intervention.

A shared focus on flexible and personalised pathways was evident. Schools offer a mix of vocational options, tailored programmes, skills-based awards and alternative learning experiences to address both push- and pull- factors that influence engagement. Strong communication with families and sustained pastoral support help to rebuild confidence and ensure learners feel connected to their next steps. Partnerships with primary schools, third-sector organisations and post-school providers further strengthen progression planning.

Challenges remain around sustainability, capacity and curriculum flexibility, particularly where effective support relies on short-term funding or intensive staffing. Digital and hybrid models show potential but require significant resource, and complex home circumstances can continue to affect attendance and motivation.

Despite these obstacles, both pieces of work highlight the impact of proactive, relationship-centred and data-informed approaches. Schools reported improved engagement and more confident transitions either into S5 or into positive destinations. Strengthening early identification processes, expanding flexible pathways, enhancing communication and securing sustainable resourcing are key next steps to support wider application of these approaches.

What learning is evident from the ‘Improving Attendance Quality Improvement Programme’?

Designed and delivered by Education Scotland, the Quality Improvement (QI) programme supports establishments to improve attendance for targeted learners using a QI methodological approach. Fourteen school establishments plus one pupil support service submitted ‘sharing the learning’ presentations. Within these, all had improved attendance for their identified learner group.

Targeting small groups first was effective and helped staff feel less overwhelmed, allowing for focused intervention work. Working closely with parents was noted as a crucial element to success. Establishments highlighted that communication and partnership with parents played a significant role in improving attendance.

Establishments applied a range of QI tools to analyse and improve attendance, including forcefield analysis, process mapping, fishbone analysis and run charts. Across all settings, learners with significant attendance issues tended to come from vulnerable groups. These demographic patterns emphasise the systemic nature of attendance challenges and the need for targeted equity-focused strategies.

Establishments emphasised the value of actively listening to learners in a supportive and non-judgmental way. Eliciting pupil voice helped staff understand the underlying reasons for absence. The effective use of real-time attendance data was a key enabler of improvement across schools, helping staff intervene more quickly. Overall, this initial QI work demonstrates positive early progress in improving attendance for targeted learners.

What do learners say about attendance?

One of the ‘actions for consideration’ in Improving Attendance: Understanding the Issues (2023), suggested that children and young people’s views should be at the centre of refreshed attendance approaches. Below is a collection of opinions and views offered directly by learners which ascertain their own beliefs around current reasons for non-attendance.

Quality Improvement (QI) Posters

Learners involved in the Education Scotland QI programme mentioned that barriers that discourage them from attending school were:

- family issues (e.g. lack of routine, no boundaries or consequences)
- health and wellbeing issues (e.g. social and emotional needs, sleep issues, health conditions)
- toxic relationships with friends and school staff
- school environments (crowded, overwhelming)

Child Poverty Action Group

The Child Poverty Action Group’s (CPAG) Young People’s Summit in autumn 2025, supported by Education Scotland, captured and analysed young people’s perspectives on school participation. Young people indicated that there remain several challenges to school participation:

- cost pressures (trips, uniforms, food, clubs)
- practical constraints (early start times, study space)
- meaningful follow-up by adults when young people are asked for their views

These perspectives demonstrate strong consensus that work is still to be done to improve school participation, equity and engagement.

Pupil Voice Evidence from Young Scot - YSAttain (Pg. 6) and from Quarriers (2025) School Attendance Engagement Report –

Reasons for non-attendance given by learners are very similar to those given by participants in Improving Attendance: Understanding the Issues (2023) and other publications. Learners who were consulted by Young Scot for the YSAttain report (2025) mentioned that although they often contribute to decision making around attendance, they noted that their voices are not always heard. Learners stressed that staff should engage in the communities where learners live to better understand local circumstances. Insights from learners interviewed by Quarriers (2025), highlighted that attendance work must distinguish disability and mental health from disengagement and that a nurturing, wellbeing-focused ethos outperforms punitive approaches. Learners noted that key barriers to attendance included:

- low self-confidence
- mental health challenges
- caring responsibilities
- learning disabilities
- other competing distractions

Learners also caution against ableist assumptions that equate attendance with personal worth and they identify poverty and wider inequalities as major, often overlooked, drivers of absence. Together, these perspectives suggest that context-aware, compassionate and youth-informed strategies could be the most effective route to improve attendance.

How is partnership working supporting attendance?

Third-sector organisations provide important support for learners and families who experience challenges around attendance and engagement. Some examples are presented below.

Attendance – Partnership Strategic Messages

Collaborative partnership working, including that of CLD organisations, encourages school staff to develop relationship-based approaches with learners and indeed families. It is important to engage and hear the voices of learners who not only have attendance issues, but who are often underrepresented. Partners offer school staff professional learning around mental health and trauma to improve understanding of on-going challenges which elicit non-attendance. To improve attendance, partners often provide a ‘non-teaching staff’ version of support for learners which offers alternative and flexible curricular pathways. This encourages learners to engage in learning either within or out with the school building.

YouthLink Scotland (2024) *The Role of Youth Work in Supporting Young People’s Readiness to Learn*

Support from partner organisations such as youth work, helps learners to re-engage with learning in the classroom and beyond (YouthLink Scotland, 2024). The study on ‘readiness to learn’ conducted by YouthLink Scotland, indicates that partnership work supports learners to have more personalisation, choice and agency in their learning. Learners commented in the study that support from external partnership agencies has had a positive impact on their school attendance, participation, engagement and motivation to succeed. Partner organisations can provide learners with experiential learning and different contexts for learning, including practical and outdoor learning in their community.

YouthLink indicate that forty-nine percent of learners involved in their 2024 study showed an improvement in school attendance. Several learners in the study were clear that youth work had motivated them to get back to school after a period of absence. One young person mentioned that “*youth workers believed in me when I didn’t. They have made so many things happen for me. I had no idea about my future*”

and youth work changed that. I am now going to do a work placement and go back to school next year" (young person). One parent said "... *she [her child] wasn't interested in school and walked away, but since attending the project she is talking about going back next year*" (parent). This was also echoed by a youth worker who mentioned that after working with them "...*three young people are returning to school full time next year*" (youth worker). A headteacher mentioned that encouragingly sixty-four percent of learners supported by youth workers in their school have improved attendance since the work started.

Appendix 1: Successful approaches to improve attendance and engagement

From the evidence gathered for this report, a wide range of successful approaches were identified. These approaches are examples, intended to support local authorities, schools and partners when considering how to further improve attendance and engagement. Absence is multi-faceted, so it is important that they are considered alongside a robust understanding of the local context.

1. Data-Informed Systems and Strategic Use of Evidence

- Regular review of data with robust systems in place, enabling early identification of trends and target groups where attendance may be a concern.
- Effective use of data to track families, schools and/or clusters with disproportionately higher levels of term-time holidays.
- Use of data to inform joined up approaches to family support, with clear systems and processes in place to inform planning and review of impact.
- Established, easy to use data systems in place that provide timely, detailed attendance information across the local authority/school, used to inform improvement planning.
- Strategic data is used to inform support and intervention.
- Detailed weekday-by-weekday attendance tracking to help spot early patterns and intervene when absences increase on a particular day.
- Analysis of attendance trends examines local context (travel, weather, community routines) helping them target support more effectively.
- Detailed, routine monitoring using dashboards, RAG tracking and SEEMiS data enables local authorities/schools to identify learners at risk of lower attendance, early and act quickly with proportionate, tailored interventions.
- Robust and timely use of tracking systems, pastoral intelligence and Skills Development Scotland insights is enabling schools to identify risk early and target support effectively.
- Targeting of small groups rather than organise whole school approaches to ensure effective and manageable approaches.
- Professional learning to build capacity in data-driven practice.

2. Relational Approaches and Family Engagement

- Strong relationships, consistent messaging and early communication with families have supported schools in maintaining steadier attendance across the whole week.
- Immediate relational contact — first-day phone calls, supportive letters, home visits and trusted-adult check-ins — helps reduce unexplained absence and maintains a positive partnership with families.
- Strong, trusting and non-judgemental relationships with families central to effective attendance work, especially when paired with clear communication about how attendance supports learning, wellbeing and long-term outcomes.
- Practical, everyday supports — including breakfast clubs, uniform or clothing help, transport support, walking buses and access to essentials — are widely used and consistently reduce the immediate barriers that prevent families from getting children to school.
- Schools that maintain continuous, two-way communication — through drop-ins, workshops, supportive phone calls, solution-focused meetings and tailored updates — foster trust and see families engage earlier when attendance concerns begin to emerge.
- Identification of persistent attendance issues linked to poverty, ASN, experience of care, mental-health challenges and term-time holidays to respond with increasingly relational, targeted and community-rooted approaches.
- Improved family-engagement practices, such as flexible meetings, home visits and the use of family hubs, are helping to build trust, address barriers and intervene before disengagement deepens.
- Culture where attendance is part of a whole-school ethos, reinforced through shared values, consistent messaging and relational practice that sustains belonging and engagement.
- Transparent, authority-level communication — including consistent messaging, clearer expectations and public campaigns — has strengthened partnerships with families and built a shared understanding of the importance of attendance.

- Relational, data-informed approaches to underpin effective improvement: schools that combine warm, proactive communication with robust monitoring cycles see earlier intervention and more stable attendance patterns.
- Strong, consistent relationships with families and trusted adults are improving attendance, engagement and learner confidence in planning next steps.
- Involving parents is key to building a clearer picture of the learner's circumstances when planning support.

3. Curriculum, Pathways and Learning Experience

- Flexible supports such as outreach sessions, nurture inputs, breakfast clubs, or planned Friday activities is helping to sustain engagement at the end of the week.
- Universal “pulls” such as soft starts, breakfast clubs, nurture spaces, Forest School sessions and walking buses to create predictable, motivating routines that increase daily attendance.
- To increase engagement of older learners, vocational and skills-based pathways (college links, apprenticeships, practical projects) have shown strong potential to re-engage pupils whose attendance had declined.
- Practical, hands-on and outdoor learning experiences in primary schools are improving day-to-day engagement, particularly for learners who struggle in more formal classroom settings.
- Flexible curriculum pathways in the secondary sector — including National Progression Awards, vocational courses, college links and skills-based programmes — are re-engaging learners who previously experienced avoidance, subject-specific anxiety or declining attendance.
- Soft-start routines, nurture bases and reduced-transition timetables are helping anxious learners feel settled more quickly and attend more reliably.
- Well-structured transitions, supported by early information sharing, extended visits and personalised planning, are helping to reduce learner anxiety and strengthen attendance at key points of change.
- Schools that sustain purposeful and motivating learning through the final days of term — such as activity weeks, celebrations and structured project learning — report fewer pre-holiday dips in attendance.

- Emphasis on high-quality learning experiences, nurturing environments and leadership opportunities to act as protective factors for attendance, helping learners feel valued and motivated to attend regularly.
- Flexible and personalised curriculum pathways — such as foundation apprenticeships, bespoke timetables and vocational placements — are re-engaging learners and supporting positive destinations.

4. Targeted Support for Learners with Additional Support Needs

- Targeted approaches — flexible/part-time timetables, safe spaces, EBSA-specific planning, counselling, outreach, key-adult support — are helping learners with complex needs maintain a connection to school.
- Personalised approaches such as home visits, bespoke plans and flexible, reduced or phased timetables are among the most effective supports for learners experiencing anxiety, EBSA, complex ASN or challenges within the home.
- Many schools now offer flexible internal arrangements, including phased returns, partial timetables, supported online learning and home-tuition elements, helping learners maintain a link to education without moving to formal flexi-schooling.
- Partnerships with youth work, skills academies, employability programmes and third-sector organisations are providing structured, motivating alternatives for learners who struggle in traditional settings.
- Regular multi-agency planning involving Educational Psychology, social work, health services and family wellbeing teams supports the creation of safe, bespoke reintegration plans that reduce the likelihood of permanent withdrawal from school.
- Acknowledgment of ongoing systemic challenges, including poverty-related barriers, mental-health pressures, complex family contexts and holiday patterns, but use of collaborative, evidence-based strategies to mitigate these.

5. Policies, Planning and Multi-Agency Working

- Coordinated early support for families with an emphasis on multi-agency working.
- Shared understanding and aims to improve attendance that align with existing policies and plans across education and relevant partners.
- Multi-agency collaboration with health services, social work, Educational Psychology, youth work and voluntary organisations enabling more holistic support for families facing compounded pressures such as poverty, mental-health needs or parenting challenges.
- Ensuring alignment of approaches with local authority attendance policies, use staged approaches and clear communication to ensure families understand expectations, procedures and supports available.
- Partners are mitigating practical and emotional barriers through person-centred support.
- Partners provide alternative learning pathways that motivate attendance and engagement.
- Provision of professional learning to support consistent understanding of data, policies and understanding of the barriers to attendance.

6. Voices of Children and Young People

- Ensuring the voices of children, young people and families of identified target groups are involved in improvement planning.
- Stronger learner voice in attendance planning, such as shaping curriculum pathways, project-based learning, leadership roles and relevant subject choices, is contributing to improved engagement, particularly in upper primary and secondary.
- Learners feedback that punitive punishments for non-attendance do not work long term.
- Keep poverty and cost of the school day at the forefront of school decisions means that more learners feel included in all activities.

7. Use of Funding and External Support

- Many schools highlight the importance of funding and predictable staffing to maintain effective attendance systems, especially where targeted relational roles and nurture-based supports have shown measurable impact.
- PEF and SAC are central to sustaining key attendance-improving roles, including family link workers, wellbeing staff, youth workers and pupil support assistants, enabling schools to intervene earlier and build stronger relationships with families.
- These funding streams also underpin practical, universal supports such as breakfast clubs, soft-start routines, outdoor learning, nurture provision and wellbeing programmes, all of which reduce barriers and increase daily readiness to learn.
- PEF and SAC are frequently used to offset cost-of-the-school-day barriers, including transport, uniforms, equipment and access to activities, helping families who might otherwise struggle to sustain regular attendance.
- Third-sector and community partnerships provide additional capacity through family work, youth engagement, counselling, wellbeing support and activity-based programmes, helping schools reach families who may not engage through school alone.
- Schools with strong external partnerships and secure staffing are more confident use of attendance data, more consistent follow-up and more sustained impact on attendance patterns over time.
- Engagement with Education Scotland — through attendance resources, attainment advisor support, quality improvement programmes and National networks — is improving data literacy, strengthening systems and helping schools to implement more targeted, evidence-based interventions.
- Partnerships with Skills Development Scotland, initiatives part-funded by the Scottish Government's No One Left Behind national approach, local youth employability services, Action for Children, Developing the Young Workforce and local employers are providing meaningful experiences that strengthen transitions and support positive leaver outcomes.

Appendix 2: School level examples

This table provides a more detailed summary of responses from schools who have demonstrated positive impact related to improving attendance. All schools selected had evidence of universal and targeted strategies which were improving attendance for learners in their schools.

Schools were identified through intelligence at local authority level, in partnership with the link attainment advisor. Rationale for identification included at least one of the following criteria: improvement over time, school attendance rates above local and/or national averages or demonstrating improvement of attendance in areas of high deprivation.

The school profile information is based on the 2024 census data.

	Universal Strategies	Targeted Strategies
Primary school Roll: 142 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 0.0% Q2 9% Q3 80% Q4 8% Q5 Supressed (C)	• Training for staff on the CIRCLE framework has had a positive impact on attendance. It has helped to refocus and recalibrate universal and targeted support. • School staff are very aware of learners who need targeted and individualised support. • It is the school's discretion for how they enact the process in the attendance policy, using relationships and knowledge of individual families as the lever for change. The school will ensure the formal process is instructed if necessary and thresholds have been met. • The strength of relationships across the school community and the positive reinforcement from teaching staff to celebrate small successes has been effective at addressing barriers related to attendance.	• Early years assistants provide a nurture group. They are highly skilled and extend their approach, using PEF, to provide targeted support for a small number of learners. • 'School and learner support assistants' who work in class, provide support with literacy interventions, such as Sound Reading System (SRS), and support learners to catch up on work missed as a result absence.

Primary School Roll: 350 Accessible small town SIMD Profile Q1 5% Q2 18% Q3 38% Q4 22% Q5 16%	• A local partner organisation delivers a range of therapeutic interventions to increase learners and young people's self-awareness and confidence to find the best ways of supporting mental health and wellbeing. Inputs focus on anxiety, emotional regulation and relationships, using story massage as the vehicle for learning. • The Forest School is a universal offer for all learners in P5 one day per week. This was previously a targeted intervention but now all learners have a forest school experience due to the positive impact on attendance in P5. • The school uses the flexibility of Curriculum for Excellence to respond to the needs of learners through providing engaging wider experiences such as outdoor experiences and farm visits. As a result, attendance and engagement of learners in targeted stages is high, contributing to overall improvements in attendance. • Attendance is RAG-rated monthly. This provides key illustrations of patterns of attendance. As a result, they can identify all learners who require help and support. The first universal protocol is to have a phone call with the parent/carer if there is a concern. If the phone call doesn't improve the situation, parent/carers are invited to have a face-to-face conversation.	• The school involves older learners in reviewing their own attendance statistics, interventions and evaluations. This approach has provided intrinsic motivation for learners to come to school. • Targeted use of PEF to support engaging timetables with required supports to increase attendance. This can include emotional check ins, nurture, sport, yoga etc. • Support for targeted families including managing bedtime, morning routines, setting boundaries, achieving a balanced diet, sleep and exercise. • A PEF-funded early years practitioner works with targeted groups of learners through a range of activities to improve attendance and engagement. • The headteacher uses face to face visits as a targeted intervention. They will either make home visits to meet with parent/carers to consider what the barriers to attendance might be or invite them into the school. • Supporting parent/carers to use an online digital app to track their own child's attendance.
Primary School Roll: 191 Remote small town SIMD Profile Q1 29%	• Whole school approach to nurture and the same language used by staff every day to welcome learners. • Staff training to discuss the year and how to keep learning 'up to date' to pull learners to school. • Free breakfast club and walking taxis for all learners and for specific targeted learners.	• Family liaison officers have worked with learners and families. • Extra-curricular clubs are provided. • Soft starts for those who need it. • Personal targeted 'pick-ups' from home address. • Professional discussions always taking place with other professionals.

Q2 25.7% Q3 25% Q4 18% Q5 0%		Families involved in discussions.
Secondary School Roll: 281 Remote small town SIMD Profile Q1 38% Q2 38% Q3 15% Q4 3% Q5 4%	- Relationships are at the heart of working with families. - Teachers are trained in nurturing approaches and trauma-informed practice. - New local authority programme 'Addressing Non-Attendance - ANA' has been helpful. - In the mornings a message is sent home for non-attendance. If no response, the Family Liaison Officer (FLO) will contact home. There are now less unexplained absences. - Rigorous tracking and monitoring of attendance data has a positive impact.	- The school has a health and wellbeing where the FLO is based to support reluctant attenders. Their physical presence is the first priority. - Some learners with health issues are working on Google classroom in the Hub. - One to one support is given for some learners. Having a key adult who can be the 'pull into school'. - Bespoke timetables are set up for some learners. Use of swimming slots, fitness suite and gym are motivators for some. Some learners spend time working in the Early Learning and Childcare (ELC) setting attached to the school.
Secondary School Roll: 750 Accessible small town SIMD Profile Q1 1% Q2 10% Q3 80% Q4 8% Q5 1%	- Promoting attendance through various avenues including assembly, posters, attendance officer, staff etc. - Building positive relationships between student, families and staff. - Working in partnership with parent/carers and partners.	- A bespoke approach is taken towards most cases of low attendance lead by the learner support team and including the local authority attendance officer. This may include monthly attendance meetings, home visits, online sessions etc. - The school offers a wellbeing hub as well as the HIVE (a nurture base where learners can check-in). The wellbeing hub is a space with dedicated staff to help young people to integrate back into school after extended absence. They will be supported to discuss issues and helping to resolve difficulties with relationships with staff and classroom environment.

		• All learners can access the wellbeing hub however it tends to be used by more S4 and above learners seeking a safe place to relax and ease anxiety, study and seek support and advice. • A full-time wellbeing officer, funded through PEF, is available to support young people. • The HIVE offers a nurturing environment which learners can access to relax, calm down, check timetables, seek support, advice etc. It is predominantly used for enhanced nurture and often occupied by learners experiencing care. Family members are welcome to use this space too.
Primary School Roll: 240 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 84% Q2 9% Q3 C Q4 5% Q5 0%	• School and family development worker (SFDW) phone calls home every morning, emails Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with the list of learners and why, highlights the focus learners and families. • Monthly attendance meetings to look at <90%. • Well planned diaries to ensure the pull to school at peak absence times, for example all Christmas parties in last week of term. • All 'To Be Confirmed' (TBCs) in SEEMiS to be updated to a reason by the end of the day.	• Primary one attendance session at induction. Stress importance of attendance to parent/carers. • Team around the child (TATC) meetings to follow up on learners not showing improvement. An opportunity to give support to parent/carers rather than to blame – a problem-solving opportunity. • School and family development worker runs a 'together to thrive' programme which focuses on sleep and routines at home. • First day referrals – if not heard from by 10 am then SFDW will go to the home of the learner. Targeted learners on the first day referral list are priorities.
Secondary school Roll: 1406	• Visuals, weekly parent/carers Padlet update, high profile at assemblies. • Raising staff awareness via staff Padlet, in-service and staff meeting presentations.	• Appointment of school and family development worker (0.5FTE). • Termly attendance celebration certificates (95% plus).

Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 31% Q2 18% Q3 10% Q4 14% Q5 25%	Updated Attendance Review Group (ARG) process in session 25-26.	- Attendance celebration assemblies (including 100% attenders). 'In2Win' attendance initiative – extrinsic motivation through reward.
Primary School Roll: 265 Accessible small town SIMD Profile Q1 40% Q2 38.5% Q3 19% Q4 C Q5 0%	- Tracking, monitoring and analysing attendance data on a six-weekly basis using the authority attendance tracker. - As a school we also track on an ongoing, almost daily, basis. - We strive to create a welcoming culture and ethos in school that focuses on health and wellbeing, including having more relaxed 'free flow' soft start and having staff at doors to support incoming; when in class learners can choose a welcome. - We have changed the letters we send out to parent/carers and make regular phone calls to establish reasons for non-attendance. - We keep activities/events to the very end of term – incentivising learners to come to school.	- Some learners have a named person who meet the learner every morning and is available to them on entry. - Nurture soft start – short, targeted approaches. - School-run breakfast club. - Identified needs through child's Plans - School refusal questionnaires. - Support of educational psychologist. - Engagement with families at the earliest opportunity. - Phone calls/letters/meetings with parent/carers.
Secondary school Roll: 1116 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 0% Q2 14% Q3 4% Q4 24% Q5 20%	- The school has implemented a coherent set of universal strategies which promote a strong culture of attendance, improve consistency of practice, and ensure early identification and support for learners whose attendance begins to decline. - Attendance is reviewed weekly through house meetings, with three meetings per month focusing on key young people and a fourth meeting dedicated specifically to attendance trends. These meetings allow staff to monitor increases or decreases in attendance, check that procedures are being followed, and agree appropriate actions, including timely phone calls home when required. - An attendance flowchart clearly outlines staff responsibilities, ensuring a consistent whole-school approach and reducing variability	- The school has implemented short, high-intensity attendance sprints for particular year groups, with a clear message that improving attendance is everyone's responsibility. This time-limited approach creates a strong sense of urgency and shared ownership across staff, learners and families. - Staff give particular attention to learners with attendance between 80–90%, recognising this group as a priority for early, preventative support before attendance declines further.

	in response. Staff confidence and consistency have increased as a result. • Attendance is embedded within universal tracking systems, with improved processes for recording, monitoring and reviewing interventions. SEEMiS attendance reports, including clear coding, are shared with parent/carers to improve transparency and understanding. • The school prioritises phone calls over text messages to strengthen relationships with families, support shared problem-solving, and reinforce the importance of regular attendance. • Initiatives such as the 'Every Day Counts' poster campaign, delivered through a cluster-based approach, have supported a shared message about the value of attendance and contributed to cultural change across the school community. • Trips, events and wider opportunities are used to promote engagement, belonging and motivation, supporting improved attendance for all learners. • Staff report knowing learners better, enabling earlier identification of issues and more appropriate, timely responses to attendance concerns.	
Primary School Roll: 503 Accessible rural area SIMD Profile Q1 12% Q2 35% Q3 1% Q4 12% Q5 39%	• Consistent implementation of the local authority attendance policy, ensuring shared expectations and clear procedures across the school. • Proactive monitoring of attendance (pupil support worker), including daily oversight, early intervention and regular follow-up with families. • Strong administrative support, enabling timely access to SEEMiS reports and up-to-date attendance data. • Breakfast club provision open to all learners with 75% of places prioritised for free school meals learners (Bright Starts Grant funded), reducing barriers to punctuality and readiness to learn. • Partnership working through the Safer Routes to School programme, including iBike activities, to remove practical barriers to getting to school.	• Walking bus initiative, supporting families where attendance and punctuality are a concern and promoting positive daily routines. Targeted practical support for families, facilitated by the pupil support worker (e.g. access to essential resources such as a tumble dryer). • A well-defined protocol within the staff handbook, particularly around unexplained absence, ensures consistency of response. Administrative staff are alert to at-risk learners and provide daily attendance updates to the Social Worker (SW) where appropriate. This

	• Regular communication via the school website and newsletter, reinforcing expectations and celebrating improvements. • Focused approach to lateness, with pupil support worker presence at the school entrance, immediate conversations, and follow-up phone calls to identify and resolve underlying issues.	leads directly to timely actions such as SW home visits and reinforces safeguarding responsibilities across the school. • Locality Team and multi-agency working. • Targeted joint working with the Locality Team is used for learners with complex or sustained attendance concerns. This includes agreeing next steps and referrals to appropriate agencies, support to ensure policies and procedures are followed consistently, and professional advice in relation to the Children's Reporter where required. • Targeted outreach has been particularly effective in supporting learners returning to school following significant or long-term illness, helping to rebuild routines and improve attendance.
Primary School Roll: 261 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 C Q2 15% Q3 C Q4 34% Q5 47%	• A weekly Microsoft Sway bundle which is sent to parent/carers includes mention of attendance every week. • The school have taken care to underline the real-life implications of missing school using a variety of examples e.g. every Tuesday or Fridays or birthdays as many parents did not find the percentages meaningful. The narrative was strong, positive and showing the benefits of attendance. • Parent/carers were the primary focus of the attendance priority: leaflets, info in Sways, meet the teacher events etc – they all had an attendance focus.	• The school tightened its procedures for sending letters for absence triggers at four levels. • While keen to understand the context of each family not attending and to respond individually, the school were more courageous and clearer in underlining attendance as non-negotiable. • The PEF-funded Principal Teacher leads on the attendance monitoring of the poorest attenders and is responsible for ensuring these targeted learners receive priority for a range of supports, clubs and activities. • The number of clubs across the school was increased to 31 and now 96% learners attend one. For some low attenders, this was the 'hook' they needed to attend more regularly.

		• P7 now have special leadership jobs and run clubs so have a responsibility. This has improved attendance, particularly with a group of P7 boys who had begun to dysregulate. • Targeted individuals receive alternative timetables, Cognitive Behavioural Therapy strategies, nurture, break out spaces, parent/carers coming to 'learning together' sessions as appropriate to their need. The schools soft start has helped many targeted learners.
Secondary school Roll: 1980 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 0.4% Q2 4% Q3 6% Q4 28% Q5 60%	• Learners who have exams in January to have extra access to their teachers for support. • The school uses reactive and proactive approaches. They are clear that parent/carers are the best resource in improving attendance and start in P6 ensuring each learner is on the right course, pathways, has support and is linked with friends. • Designated social areas have been made available to build community, recognising that for some learners the social aspect of school is the biggest hook. • Attendance is shared in real life terms with parent/carers, making links between attendance and attainment e.g. 90% of learners attending 92% of the time achieve '5@5' but of those attending lower than 80%, only 60% of those learners attain the same. The links are made to attendance and not ability. • Pastoral teachers teach Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) weekly to connect and conduct attendance spot checks / lates. A move away from a vertical pastoral system has also made a difference to how well senior leaders know individual learners and can impact of attendance. • From P7 onwards, staff attend information nights at cluster primaries and speak specifically about attendance and timekeeping with early links to pastoral teacher through transition conversations to pick up any historic poor attendance. Attendance is addressed in every	• Bespoke timetables are in place for a small number of learners e.g. take one subject out and go twice to history, and flexibility to make course changes where a disliked subject is the barrier to attendance. • The school has a specific 'Learner Learning Centre' which is a quiet place for working. Managed by two wellbeing officers, up to 10 learners who need a flexible timetable can be supported at any one time. • In addition, the 'Hub' supports individuals who require; nurture group, CLD workers group or resilience group. This is not self-selected but relates to action plans put in place following the assessments and analyses detailed above. • Motivation, Commitment and Resilience (MCR) Pathways has been introduced and has attendance as a key criterion for mentor selection.

	assembly and all staff have had ‘CIRCLE’ training to ensure the environment is welcoming for all learners. • The school undertakes a wellbeing assessment after first report with every learner. These are RAG-rated and the 60 learners with the most significant issues are given individual support according to identified area, including attendance and late coming. All S1 learners receive an early 1-1 wellbeing check in with attendance and late coming a key feature of the conversation with a follow up action plan if required. In addition, they referee a phone call to parent/carers / carers to triangulate the information. When required, work is planned with parent/carers to re-engage and ensure they know how to improve their particular child’s attendance. • S4 prelims are a big attendance focus. Period by period analysis allows staff to call or collect learners who have not made it in on time. By issuing the results on the last day before holidays, the school works to ensure learners attend every day.	
Primary School Roll: 209 SIMD Profile Q1 43% Q2 30% Q3 20% Q4 4% Q5 C	• A dedicated attendance team includes the deputy headteacher, School People Support Officer (PSO), funded through PEF, and Learning Communities People Support Officer, funded through the Strategic Equity Fund. • Clear and consistent procedures are followed by all staff. • Initiatives such as ‘Every Day Counts’ and ‘Every Minute Counts’ engage parent/carers, and staff to raise awareness of the importance of school attendance. • The People Support Officer is available in the office each morning to speak with learners and families who arrive late, identify barriers, and monitor patterns that may require support. • A holiday request form must be completed prior to any planned holiday absence. • A consistent approach is maintained across the learning community. • All parent/carers receive a monthly update on their child’s attendance to ensure they are aware of attendance percentages. • Strong leadership fosters positive relationships with families.	• Weekly attendance meetings to identify which individuals and families of concern are targeted. • Families/individuals are allocated to a PSO to support and build links with them. PSOs will look at barriers to learning and meet regularly with the family. • Seek further professional partner agency involvement, if necessary, through getting it right for every child process. • Nurture well-being support team to support individuals and families with the barriers to learning for example anxiety through weekly and daily sessions. • Senior leadership team and attendance team receive an overview of absences daily to support.

	Attendance tracking is completed weekly to provide a clear overview of current absence and to identify barriers or concerns.	- Team identifies when we can support with getting learners into school considering barriers that can be overcome or to highlight patterns quickly. - Post attendance letters are sent out to families where attendance is increasing. - Visits by PSO to support parent/carers and carers in getting learners to school.
Secondary school Roll:1007 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 46% Q2 20% Q3 17% Q4 9% Q5 7%	- An agreed system for period-by-period registration ensures accurate, timely data and supports the daily follow up of anomalies; this aligns with the SEEMiS expectations in the Maximising Attendance guidance. - Daily anomalies check by office staff. They run a daily check of SEEMiS anomalies so unexplained absences or missing marks are identified and acted on the same day, reducing drift and improving early contact with families. - Every learner receives a concise monthly snapshot showing their attendance for the previous month, their overall attendance to date, and the number of times they have been late; this transparent feedback drives learner responsibility and supports tutor/Pupil Support Leader (PSL) conversations. - Auditing of SEEMiS codes (e.g. LAT, SEL, SEP, OAT) improves coding accuracy and ensures attendance figures reflect the correct reasons for absence. - A single, accessible file centralises reports, templates and evidence so staff can act quickly and consistently. - Using the same infographics and messages across schools reduces mixed signals for families and supports joint working with partners and the Education Wellbeing Service. - Tutor time 2.0 has been revamped for 2025/26 to prioritise wellbeing and attendance conversations; tutors are the first point of contact for learners. We are beginning to build link directly with PSLs for follow up.	- Primary transition planning: Attendance concerns identified at transition are handed over with plans and supports so learners start secondary school with bespoke arrangements in place. - Bespoke and part time timetables: Formalised adapted/part time timetables are used to re-engage learners; timetables are agreed with families, recorded on SEEMiS (ATF / PTH / PTX where appropriate) and reviewed regularly. - Attendance intervention groups: Small, targeted groups run by PSLs/Pupil Support Assistants provide focused support (catch up work, attendance coaching) for learners showing emerging patterns of non-attendance. - Inclusion provision: One to one support and inclusion placements give alternative routes back into learning. - Digital engagement for absent learners: iPads, Microsoft (MS) Teams work and virtual learning environment resources ensure learners who cannot attend physically can access meaningful learning and remain connected to school routines.

	• A targeted pilot (began Oct 2025; to be reviewed Dec 2025) has S5/6 tutors supporting attendance anomalies in tutor time, increasing peer age conversations and ownership among senior learners. • PSLs deliver attendance focused input in Personal and Social Education (PSE) and give extra attention during course choice and tracking conversations so learners see the link between attendance, choices and outcomes. • Whole school assemblies reinforce the importance of attendance and punctuality, using the same infographics and language as the Learning Community to ensure clarity and fairness across feeder schools. • Safety and wellbeing data are reviewed so safeguarding concerns are identified early and appropriate GIRFEC planning or referrals are triggered where needed. • High participation in community events such as feast day mass strengthens belonging and demonstrates the positive link between community engagement and regular attendance. • Flowchart and escalation routes: Staff use the established flowchart for secondary period by period checks and unexplained absence procedures; this ensures consistent, safe escalation and that learners at risk are identified quickly. • Prompt, routine contact (Groupcall/phone/email) and alignment with the local authority 'Every Day Counts' messaging and national focus on attendance mean families receive a clear, safety minded rationale for follow up and support. • These universal strategies have strengthened early identification, improved communication, and created a respectful, safe environment where learners are ready to learn and families understand the importance of every day in school.	• Period by period monitoring and anomaly reporting: Targeted period by period checks for identified learners (vulnerable learners added to the A–Z) produce a daily anomaly report that PSLs use to prioritise follow up. • Letters at key attendance thresholds: Standardised letters at 90% and 85% are actioned by PSLs and logged on SEEMiS so interventions are timely and auditable. • Attendance file and resources: Absence letters, translated materials (Polish) and templates are stored on MS Teams for consistent, rapid use by staff. • Family centred communication: Letters, phone calls and translated materials are used respectfully to engage families; communications are accessible on MS Teams and mirror the Learning Community infographics to avoid mixed messages. • Year head and multi-agency casework: Regular year head meetings where individual cases are discussed and next steps recorded ensure decisions are collaborative, proportionate and recorded. • PSL led targeted work in curriculum contexts: PSLs deliver focused input in PSE, support during course choice conversations and run attendance intervention groups so support is delivered where learners feel most comfortable. • Education Wellbeing Service (EWS) advice on coding and practice, plus two staff sessions delivered by EWS, have improved staff
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		confidence and ensured interventions are trauma informed and non-punitive. • S5/6 tutor pilot (tutors supporting attendance anomalies in tutor time) increases peer level responsibility and offers a respectful, age-appropriate route to re engagement. • Safeguarding led follow up: Family Support Officer visits and the daily anomaly process ensure learners who are absent and potentially at risk are identified quickly and visited where appropriate. • Vulnerable learner tracking: Adding vulnerable learners to the A–Z and producing a dedicated period by period anomaly report focuses resources on those with the highest safeguarding need. • Recorded, auditable actions: All targeted interventions, letters and meetings are recorded on SEEMiS so escalation is evidence-based and timely. • EWS escalation and offers: EWS advice and invitations to work with staff have strengthened referral pathways and clarified when to escalate to external support; staff training has updated offers and next steps. • Safe alternatives to full attendance: Bespoke timetables are used as safe, planned alternatives where full time attendance would be harmful or counterproductive.
Secondary school Roll: 889	• Positive communication is key. • Consistency of approach – warm welcome for everyone including those who were late. Lateness has increased but attendance has improved.	• PEF-funded Principal Teacher focusing on young people with less than 40% attendance, providing bespoke support (health and wellbeing, curriculum, pedagogy, family support).

Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 43% Q2 11% Q3 23% Q4 13% Q5 9%	• PEF supported initiative – ‘Thrive for 95.’ • Know your number campaign – young people are encouraged to know their own attendance. • Weekly communication to parent/carers identifying attendance. • Attendance stand at parent/carers’ night, where parent/carers are encouraged to speak about attendance and absence. • Introduction of “Tutor Time” – 10 minutes each day with an adult to build relationships; attendance discussed weekly with early identification of patterns. • First-day contact and same-day follow-up for unexplained absence; clear escalation pathways with a supportive tone. • Visible attendance dashboards for staff and learners (e.g., tutor-level boards) to build shared accountability. • Recognition and celebration (e.g. postcards home, praise assemblies, certificates, attendance milestones) balanced with support for those struggling. • Barrier removal: breakfast club, uniform support, travel assistance, access to devices/charging, quiet start spaces. • Belonging and engagement: strong extra-curricular offer, clubs, leadership roles, and house systems that include all learners. • Consistent coding practice and staff training so registers are accurate and timely.	• Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings with multi-agency partners to coordinate plans for persistent absence and school refusal. • Individual Attendance Action Plans with SMART goals, agreed review points (4–8-week cycles), and a named key adult. • Mentoring/coaching, check-and-connect, and targeted tutoring for re-engagement. • Adjusted timetables (part-time reintegration, flexible starts/finishes), safe base, and supported transitions between classes. • Home visits and family support (including practical help with routines, transport, and benefits advice). • Targeted wellbeing interventions (e.g. anxiety programmes, counselling, youth work) and rapid response after any period of non-attendance.
Secondary School Roll: 1941 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 74% Q2 17% Q3 6%	• Clear, consistent messaging of high expectations across assemblies, PSHE, newsletters and corridor conversations • School promotes a strong culture of “Every Day Matters”, linking attendance to wellbeing, relationships, achievement and future pathways. • Staff use shared language and follow a consistent line on lateness, uniform and readiness to learn, creating predictable routines that support high attendance. • Learner Support, SLT and pastoral staff meet learners at the front entrance each morning. This warm, relational start, combined with	• Using the attendance tracker, PTPS and SLT identify learners who fall into: • 92–94% emerging concern • Below 90% persistent absence • Pattern-based risk (Mondays/Fridays, particular subjects, seasonal dips, lateness patterns). This allows the school to intervene early, before learners reach statutory thresholds • PTPS meet individually with targeted learners to create a short, personalised attendance

Q4 3% Q5 C	clear boundaries, reduces anxiety on entry, improves punctuality and increases learners' sense of being known and noticed. • Each young person has a named principal teacher pupil support (PTPS) who monitors patterns, recognises early warning signs and maintains regular communication with families. This universal structure ensures every learner has a trusted adult and reduces escalation into statutory attendance processes. • Same-day contact with home, Groupcall after period 2, and monitored attendance cards provide accountability and allow families to resolve barriers early. This consistency of approach has significantly reduced "casual absences" and patterns of short, repeated absences. • Digital systems created in-house allow PTPS and SLT to identify learners with emerging patterns (e.g. sparklines, monthly trend flags). This data-driven approach means interventions happen before absences become entrenched. • By embedding SHANARRI language in assemblies, PSHE, learner conversations and PTPS meetings, the school normalises conversations around: • sleep • routines • mental/physical wellbeing • emotional readiness • safe relationships This reduces emotionally based school avoidance and encourages learners to return sooner after absence. • The school uses merits, certificates, assemblies, year-group shout-outs and positive phone calls home to reinforce attendance habits. S1/S2 merit systems, Health and Wellbeing Ambassador leadership roles and whole-school recognition create positive peer influence. • Strong partnership working links with: • Educational Psychology • EAL Service • Attendance & Welfare Service	plan including: • barriers (sleep, transport, anxiety, peer conflict) • goals • attendance check-ins • agreed supports • parent involvement The relational connection and regular follow-up ensure accountability and support. • Phone calls, texts and meetings are used proactively for targeted learners. School uses: • supportive conversations • solution-focused language • clear but compassionate expectations This strengthens trust and helps parent/carers feel part of the solution, not blamed • Learners with declining attendance access a staged response: • Stage 1 – PTPS Meeting • Stage 2 – PTPS + Year Head / SLT • Stage 3 – Staged Intervention • Stage 4 – Multi-agency planning (Educational Psychologist, Social Work, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service) This ensures escalation is consistent but still supportive. • Targeted learners receive: • regular check-ins • gradual re-integration timetables • morning meet-and-greet • supported transitions between classes – time out passes, 5-minute passes • wellbeing interventions
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	• Third sector supports • Youth Health Service / CAMHS pathways These universal supports ensure that when barriers arise, learners can access the right help quickly, reducing prolonged absence. • Regular newsletters, year-group updates and accessible messaging help parent/carers understand: • attendance expectations • how to report absences • support available • the impact of missing learning • Families see the school as approachable, which increases early contact and prevents disengagement. • Parental communication, Attendance Policy, Parental Attendance Policy highlighting all roles within improving attendance, sharing statistics, Learner Support Newsletter.	• decompression period This has been particularly effective for school-refusers and anxiety-related absence. • Targeted learners are matched with a consistent adult who: • checks in daily or weekly • monitors attendance, punctuality and progress • builds positive habits • reinforces successes • Small groups meet weekly to focus on: • routines • organisation • friendships • confidence • healthy habits • problem solving The group approach reduces stigma and reinforces belonging. • Attendance Rewards • Termly attendance shout-outs • PTPS/SLT praise This reinforces progress even when learners are still below national thresholds. • For targeted learners with complex barriers, we work with: • Educational Psychology (formulation & EBSA planning) • Social Work • CAMHS / Youth Health Service • Community Links Workers • English for Speakers of Other Languages/English as an Additional Language services
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		This reduces long-term absence and provides coordinated support. • Some learners benefit from: • time-limited flexible arrangements • supported study hubs • alternative timetables • vocational pathways in the senior phase • re-engagement activities • Where transport is a barrier, the school works with families to explore: • transport cards • adjusted routines • taxi arrangements (in partnership cases) This has improved attendance for vulnerable learners with mobility, safety or anxiety barriers.
Primary school Roll: 103 Other urban areas SIMD Profile Q1 35% Q2 C Q3 28% Q4 31% Q5 C	• Monthly 100% attendance certificates. • Breakfast club provision (supported by Magic Breakfast). • Staff greet all learners daily. • Positive communication with families through weekly updates and newsletters. • Consistent approach to late arrivals – warm welcome and restorative conversations. • Celebration assemblies and certificates for 100% attendance, with positive mentions for improved attendance.	• Support for families – links with cluster high school and early intervention. • Information shared with families where attendance falls below 90%. • Bespoke support for identified families – soft starts, additional roles within breakfast club and flexible routines. • Individualised plans for learners, including soft starts and safe spaces, as appropriate. • Multi-agency meetings as required, involving health and social work partners. • Regular check-ins for learners with low levels of attendance.
Primary school Roll: 230	• The positive relationships between staff and learners contributes to consistently high levels of attendance. This is reflected in the supportive culture of the school and in relation to strong and consistent leadership.	• Taking an individualised approach, based on the needs of the child and their family, where relevant. This includes ongoing monitoring of attendance data as well as discussions during

Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 3% Q2 8% Q3 9% Q4 11% Q5 67%	• The importance of attendance is regularly discussed with parent/carers/carers, at Parent Council meetings and via the school newsletter.	attainment meetings regarding attendance concerns. Actions taken are clearly recorded with reviews included in further attainment meetings. The headteacher knows the learners and community very well and has put in place specific supports for a small number of learners, for example, greeting learners at the start of the school day.
Primary School Roll: 365 Other urban areas SIMD Profile Q1 C Q2 62% Q3 10% Q4 17% Q5 9%	• Clear policies and procedures that are shared with the whole staff team. • Attendance awareness training for all staff – strong awareness of data across school, locally and nationally, whole staff processes e.g. welcoming all learners into class regardless of arrival time (Meet and Greet), accurately recording absences/lateness, staff use wellbeing concern forms to raise concerns regarding absences, clear flowcharts for absence actions, nurturing approaches, awareness and sensitive to needs, avoiding lining up in morning (P1-P3) as doors open 5 minutes early with staff ready to meet learners, no school bell. • Attendance is collated and shared with Home School Practitioner and SLT every morning before 10 am. Actions are taken regarding absences, SLT informed particularly of vulnerable learners. • The importance of regular attendance is promoted through letters, posters and messages with visual statistics of days lost. • Monthly attendance and number of late arrivals are sent by text messages to all families. • Awareness of ‘flipping the narrative’ – rather than attendance/number of days/hours of learning missed. • Attendance is an important focus for our ELC as this supports early intervention. • Home School Practitioner works fulltime and is a familiar staff member to families. Has a work phone so that families can speak/text directly. Supports families with concerns, worries and will also offer to collect learners when families are struggling.	• Toast Club in nurture area – targeted groups of learners attend who have been identified to struggle with attendance, lateness, family concerns, anxiety etc. • The Nest (nurture area) with a Class Teacher and Home School Practitioner is used to support learners throughout the day including breaks and lunches. Fruit and water are available. Safe and inviting space within the school. • Nurture Groups are planned to run throughout the year. These include Lego Therapy, Seasons for Growth, Drawing and Talking, transition groups, outdoor learning groups. We also use a variety of partners to support in school e.g. Play Midlothian, Young Carers Midlothian – Bike Group (out with school), weekly one-to-one sessions in school. • One-to-one sessions nurturing supports. • Support staff providing opportunities for check-ins, trusted adults identified. • Alternative timetable/curriculum. • Later start time/earlier finish time by five minutes and through alternative door (less busy, meeting a trusted adult, consistent routines). All staff aware including office staff.

	Attendance concerns are discussed at Weekly Wellbeing meetings. Actions include: tailored contact e.g. text message, phone call or home visit, formal letters – following 4 step staged approach - each step is reviewed over 4-weekly periods), meeting with parent/carer to discuss, link with other partners already involved, referrals (e.g. Family Wellbeing Service, Duty Social Work, The Reporter, Home-link Family Support, Learners 1st, Barnardo's Together for Positive Change, School Nursing Service), offers to collect/walk learners to/from school and additional clothing e.g. jackets/hats/scarves for learners requiring it.	
Secondary school Roll: 770 Other urban areas SIMD Profile Q1 18% Q2 42% Q3 15% Q4 18% Q5 5%	- Relationships, nurturing approach, values-orientated leadership across the school. - Clear procedures and policies around attendance (communicated to parent/carers) - Groupcall text messages - highlight missing learners early. - Learner Support Assistants - frontline pastoral support for learners and families - regularly on the phone - Previous focus on 'Attendance Matters' campaign - looking to relaunch in January. - Holistic view of attendance - attempts to use data to capture attendance, missing/truancy and out-of-class.	- Improvement to systems to capture patterns of attendance concern - built into house meetings calendar. Includes attendance, missing/truancy and out-of-class. - House meetings - combined and consistent approach for young people and families. - Very flexible, bespoke offerings for young people - both in school and external opportunities. - Home School Practitioner - home visits and increased engagement with families. - Pareto approach underway (positive feeling about where this may lead). - Family Wellbeing Service and TATC have been utilised for specific cases - need to move to an early-intervention referral as opposed to waiting until in-school support is exhausted.
Primary school Roll: 326 Remote small town	- Whole school 'Positive Relationship Policy' has ensured a warm, positive ethos which promotes inclusion and respect for all. Whole school approach to nurture and trauma informed practice has ensured learners needs are understood and supported. - Universal and targeted approaches to support the health and wellbeing of all.	Staff share concerns about a learner's engagement, attendance or wellbeing at the earliest stage and implement interventions to improve attendance.

SIMD Profile Q1 0% Q2 18% Q3 82% Q4 0% Q5 0%	• Ensuring good attendance and punctuality is a priority for everyone. Promoting good attendance through policies, documents, self-evaluation, training, meetings and communications. • Implementation of the local authority attendance policy. • Office staff keep a spreadsheet to record reasons for absences. This rich data helps to identify patterns and trends for particular learners. This information supports discussions with parent/carers/ carers regarding absences. • Parent/carers use a 'Notification to Withdraw Form' to notify the school about short-term occasional planned absences. • Regular communication and dialogue with parent/carers and carers to reduce occasional term-time absence for holidays, activities, family circumstances etc. • Monthly attendance monitoring in place that tracks in-month and cumulative attendance for learners and picks up on where total attendance falls below 90%. Consideration of learner characteristics, such as gender, free school meals, PEF, ASN etc. to understand the learner demographics and contextual factors affecting our school and where specific efforts should be targeted to drive improvement. • Where occasional absences are accumulating to an attendance below 90% and there is no just cause documented, the school will follow up in writing with parent/carers and carers to identify the attendance issue and encourage increase in future months. • When parent/carers sign their children out of the building for medical appointments, there is a clear expectation made to return their child to school after the appointment has finished.	• Identify and investigate patterns of absence and plan specific interventions to improve attendance. • Support with transport to school. • Head of School available every morning to support families to get learners into school, both on the telephone and in person to support the transition into the building. • Use of staged intervention processes to support attendance. • Keep a chronology of repeated and regular absences and associated follow-up actions. • Ensure effective communication, treating learners and parent/carers/carers as partners when exploring appropriate supports. • Respond sensitively and respectfully to learners and parent/carers/carers when exploring attendance concern. • Meetings with families take place, to discuss reasons for low attendance and to agree and implement strategies to support improvement in attendance. • Multi-agency referrals are made if required. • Support from other agencies is key, e.g. Family Support, Action for Learners, School Nursing Team. • Liaise with the Local Authority Attendance Forum to review and monitor individual cases to consider the quality of the plan, the appropriateness of the interventions and evaluate the impact. • Where non-attendance persists, despite following staged intervention with supports in
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		place and communication with parent/carers, proceed to referral to 'Attendance Monthly Forum' or, where there is evidence to suggest the need for statutory engagement, the Scottish Children's Reporter Administration.
Primary school Roll: 22 Remote rural area SIMD Profile Q2 100%	• Putting the attendance figures on all tracking reports along with a RAG highlighted colour. • For S3 & S4s - more frequent tracking and sharing this at parent/carers evenings. • Parent/carers thanked for supporting school in this work, including understanding that holidays can't be authorised. • Encouraging dental or optician appointments to be arranged in the school holidays. • Islands context makes this more important.	• Encouraging attendance, e.g. picking up learners when there are problems with transport. • Sending letters and having phone calls (admin by 10 am, encouraged to phone by 9.30am) regarding any concerning trends e.g. spotting patterns of absence, parent/carers not phoning in when a child is absent.
Primary school Roll: 365 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 26% Q2 28% Q3 20% Q4 13% Q5 10%	• Staged intervention approach. • Breakfast club provision – toast and go plus daily fruit (supported by Greggs and Tesco). • Inclusive practice, staff greet all learners daily. • Soft start for all learners which include bespoke support for identified and targeted individuals. • Positive communication with families through weekly updates and newsletters. • Attendance information leaflet for parent/carers and carers. • Consistent approach to late arrivals – warm welcome and restorative conversations. • Attendance is discussed with parent/carers as part of parent contact meetings. • Nurture support at breakfast for identified young people. • Staff know their learners well and offer a range of bespoke and targeted supports. • House and class attendance statistics are shared with learners via assembly and on display in school main corridor.	• This is part of a Senior Leadership Team meetings on a fortnightly basis where patterns, gaps and interventions are discussed. Information shared with families where attendance falls below 92% as per local authority policy. • Community Learning Worker engages with identified learners and their families. • Bespoke support for identified families – soft starts, additional roles within breakfast club and flexible routines. • Individualised plans for learners, including soft starts and safe spaces, as appropriate. • Multi-agency meetings as required, involving health and social work partners. • Regular check-ins for learners with low levels of attendance.

		• Staff offer clubs to support all learners but there is a focus on supporting/identifying learners with attendance concerns. • Links with and supports from Active Schools targeted as necessary.
Secondary school Roll: 1462 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 4% Q2 10% Q3 12% Q4 35% Q5 37%	• Positive communication is key. • Consistency of approach. • Focus on learners and young people where attendance is below 92% as per local authority (LA) policy. • Parental survey link added to attendance letters to ascertain reasons for absence and potential supports required. This is supporting a data informed approach and allowing for great analysis of reasons for absence. It is also supporting with the removal of assumptions ensuring the correct support and/or interventions can be identified. • Barrier removal, uniform support, travel assistance, quiet start spaces. • Belonging and engagement, strong extra-curricular offer, clubs, leadership roles. • Consistent coding practice and staff training so registers are accurate and timely. • Improving attendance is a school improvement priority during session 2025/26. This includes universal and targeted improvements. • Looking outwards and learning from other schools both within the authority and nationally.	• Outreach support for increasing number of learners with attendance rates which are concerning. This bespoke support focuses on improved attainment, engagement and attendance. • Working to ensure young people have level 3 and level 4 qualifications in areas which will support sustained post school destinations. • Team Around the Child (TAC) meetings with multi-agency partners to coordinate plans for persistent absence and school refusal. • Individual Attendance Action Plans with SMART goals, agreed review points (4–8-week cycles) and a named key adult. • Adjusted timetables (part-time reintegration, flexible starts/finishes), safe base and supported transitions between classes. • Home visits and family support (including practical help with routines, transport and benefits advice). • Targeted wellbeing interventions (e.g., anxiety programmes, counselling, youth work) and rapid response after any period of non-attendance. • ‘Navigate’, a specialist off-site support service for secondary school learners who have social, emotional and communication needs. It provides a flexible, trauma-informed

		educational setting alongside social care, while learners remain enrolled at their home school. Delivered by a team of senior social care officers, learner support assistants and learner support teachers. Support includes individual education plans and wraparound care. 'Navigate' works in partnership with learners' mainstream schools and the council's social work services to support reintegration and longer-term outcomes.
Secondary school Roll: 1517 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 1% Q2 8% Q3 33% Q4 11% Q5 44%	• Clear and detailed instructions for coding are provided and audited by the Depute Head Teacher (. Weekly attendance data is collated and presented in run chart format for review by the Extended Leadership Team (ELT). • Absence codes are analysed to identify recurring patterns, which inform subsequent actions. Office staff play a greater role in providing timely attendance updates to parent/carers, and Groupcall is used to facilitate open messaging between the office and parent/carers, helping to reduce stigma associated with school absence. • Registers are taken in every class, and office staff verify attendance for each period. The headteacher meets with depute on a weekly basis, with attendance as a major focus at each meeting. Attendance data is incorporated into the school interventions spreadsheet to ensure ongoing monitoring and action planning. • The tone of absence letters has changed to become more empathetic. • Attendance leaflets and posters are produced to promote awareness and engagement. Attendance information is featured at every school open evening for parent/carers, ensuring that expectations and support are clearly communicated. • Work is ongoing with cluster primary schools to strengthen collaboration and consistency in approach. Class teachers hold	• Internal truancy is tracked to identify patterns and underlying issues, such as whether learners are unable to access the curriculum. • Tracking highlights which classes these learners attend and which they do not, and the depute headteacher analyses this data to inform next steps. • The approach to returning to school has changed; for example, learners are not assessed on their first day back after an absence and are greeted in a welcoming manner to support reintegration. The depute provides EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) training for all staff to strengthen understanding and practice. • The work of the West Partnership is built upon and further developed to enhance collaborative strategies. Learner cohort data is analysed to enable targeted interventions for specific groups.

	responsibility for attendance within their classes, enabling earlier intervention when concerns arise. • There is less stigma surrounding absence, with a greater emphasis on providing support for families rather than adopting a punitive approach.	
Primary school Roll: 242 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 39% Q2 9% Q3 9% Q4 16% Q5 24%	• The headteacher checks attendance on a daily basis. Actions resulting from this: office staff send a text or phone call to absentees, parent/carers are given up to 10.30am to respond. headteacher then follows up (often with a home visit). • Teaching staff identify patterns of absence and alert headteacher who then conducts further analysis. • Headteacher undertakes monthly analysis of learners with less than 90% attendance and more than ten lates. • Soft start- school doors open at 8.45 am allowing learners to come into school earlier if that is the preference headteacher builds strong relationships with families. • Office staff are crucial to whole approach.	• TAC (team around the child) process is followed, support from other agencies e.g. Educational Psychologist.
Secondary school Roll: 1097 Accessible rural area SIMD Profile Q1 1% Q2 2% Q3 21% Q4 55% Q5 20%	• The school has established a strong range of universal approaches to promote positive attendance and wellbeing. • Attendance is promoted as a shared responsibility across the school community. Staff maintain a strong focus on learning and teaching, supported by regular communication and the systematic sharing of attendance data. • Positive, trusting relationships underpin the school's culture and ethos. Strategic investment in digital technology ensures continuity of learning for learners who are unable to attend, supporting engagement and reducing the risk of learning loss. • Morning house time is highly valued by learners in S1 and S2 and contributes positively to routines, relationships and readiness to learn. • A cluster-wide improvement focus on gender has contributed to sustained improvement in attendance, with current rates of 91% for girls and 92% for boys.	• Targeted strategies include a dedicated nurture provision (the Garden Room) led by a Learner Support Worker which includes early-morning nurture support for a small group of S1 girls. Provision is flexible and carefully structured, enabling learners to access appropriate support in a calm and supportive environment. • Further targeted nurture support is available for learners with social, emotional and behavioural needs, underpinned by effective multi-agency collaboration through a 'team around the house' model involving guidance staff, Learner Support Workers and Support for Learning.

		• Targeted approaches have been implemented to support learners most at risk of low attendance. This includes a Quality Improvement Programme focused on S4 boys, particularly those in receipt of free school meals and with additional support needs. Support is personalised and learner-centred, informed by careful identification of individual barriers to attendance. Interventions include proactive family contact, outreach learning opportunities and flexible approaches to engagement. • Enhanced support is also in place for senior phase learners. A small number of S5 learners experiencing anxiety are supported through live access to learning via Microsoft Teams, enabling them to participate virtually within the classroom. • Targeted support for S6 learners is provided to sustain engagement and promote successful outcomes. • Learner Support Workers provide in-class support where required and facilitate learning in alternative environments, including community-based provision, with carefully planned phased returns to school through alternative entry points.
Primary school Roll: 179 Other urban area SIMD Profile	• A range of well-embedded universal strategies have had a strong positive impact on attendance across the school. Central to this has been closer partnership working with parent/carers, including regular attendance meetings that focus on understanding the individual context of each family. These discussions enable early identification of barriers to attendance and ensure timely referrals to appropriate internal and external supports.	• Targeted attendance support is provided through strong multi-agency collaboration, with referrals to, and consultancy from, a range of specialist services embedded directly within the school. This targeted approach ensures that families experiencing the most significant

Q1 45% Q2 28% Q3 21% Q4 4% Q5 C	• There is a strong, whole-school focus on health and wellbeing, which underpins all practice. This includes a nurturing ethos, a consistent nurture focus across stages, and targeted in-class support. A Nurture Teacher works in every classroom, providing regulation and wellbeing support, including calming strategies such as massage, which helps learners feel settled and ready for the day. • The school's breakfast club plays a key role in promoting attendance by ensuring learners start the day well-supported, fed, and emotionally regulated, particularly those who may otherwise struggle to attend on time. This is complemented by play-based pedagogy and a pared-back curriculum, which reduces pressure and anxiety for learners and increases engagement, especially for those with additional needs. • The 'Ready to Learn' approach ensures families are well informed about the support available to them, increasing confidence in the school's ability to meet their child's needs. Multi-agency working is further strengthened through partners attending parent/carers' evenings, helping to raise awareness and provide direct access to support services. • Whole-school assemblies focused on building resilience reinforce these approaches, promoting emotional literacy, coping strategies, and a shared understanding of wellbeing. • Together, these universal strategies create a supportive, inclusive environment where learners feel safe, valued, and engaged, leading to improved attendance and sustained engagement in learning.	barriers to attendance receive timely and coordinated support. • The 'Ready to Learn' team plays a key role in supporting attendance for vulnerable learners. The team is currently working intensively with 10 families, offering tailored support, practical strategies, and liaison between school and home to address underlying challenges impacting attendance. • In addition, the Inclusion and Wellbeing Team, a local authority resource based within the school, provides targeted support for learners with additional support needs, emotional wellbeing difficulties, and emerging barriers to regular attendance. Their close working relationship with school staff allows for early intervention and consistent support. • The school also works closely with Whole Family Support, a local authority team that provides targeted intervention for families with complex needs. This service supports improvements in attendance by addressing wider family circumstances, strengthening parental capacity, and promoting sustained engagement with education. • Together, these targeted strategies enable a coordinated, relational approach to attendance improvement, ensuring that support is personalised, responsive, and focused on long-term improvement for both learners and their families.
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		• Alongside this, the school uses attendance meetings and letters aligned with local authority policy to ensure clarity, consistency, and early intervention. These are complemented by regular phone calls home, which help maintain strong relationships and promote shared responsibility for attendance. • An in-house nurture team provides ongoing targeted support to families and learners, while home visits ensure high levels of engagement, particularly for families who may find it difficult to access support through school-based meetings alone.
Primary school Roll: 61 Remote rural area SIMD Profile Q4 100%	• Data is gathered regularly from learners across the school. This includes quantitative data related to self-assessment of all eight SHANARRI measures- with particular attention to safe, respected and achieving- linked to the school values. Also included is qualitative data on how learners feel about coming to school. • The whole school ethos is built on positive relationships and consistency- learners feel safe coming to school and know that all staff work for them to improve their outcomes. • Where improvements are seen through targeted strategies- staff look to incorporate to universal offer- and the use of soft start is an example of this.	• This depends on the needs of the child and/or family. Effective strategies include the headteacher collecting learners from home (when they miss the school bus or if there are any challenges in the home at that time), visits to the home to discuss attendance and offer support. • An effective targeted strategy has been to introduce a “soft start” to the school day for individuals, to support readiness to learn. This has been scaled up and now all classes operate a soft start to every school day in class. This is called “Fun 31” and is linked to the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child article 31 (the right to engage in leisure, play and cultural activities). During this time (31 minutes) all learners check in (this ranges from selecting a smiley face to downloading a QR code to record how they are feeling), engage in a short task based on

		current learning and then enjoy structured play activities. During this time, teaching staff can spend time with individuals who have missed out on any learning and teaching due to absence or to complete homework tasks.
Secondary school Roll: 1192 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 19% Q2 14% Q3 29% Q4 11% Q5 24%	• Consistent approaches to coding and registration have been implemented to ensure accuracy and reliability in attendance tracking. There has been a significant reduction in late arrivals compared to previous years, reflecting the effectiveness of revised strategies. • Efforts have been made to maximise efficiency within school processes to support improved attendance outcomes. Since 2022/23, designated attendance leads have focused on refining processes and ensuring consistency. These roles have evolved organically to meet the school's needs effectively. Guidance staff and administrative teams also play a critical role in managing attendance processes and ensuring smooth implementation of strategies. • The school also operates a house points system where attendance directly contributes to points. Learners achieving 90% or above attendance in each month earn 30 points for their house, while those with 100% attendance earn 50 points. This work was led by the attendance leads in the school.	• The local authority 'Skills Academy' has been instrumental in identifying cohorts within S3 and S4 who struggle with the full subject offer of seven subjects, addressing school avoidance linked to this challenge. The school have implemented their own in-school 'Skills Academy' to target support in literacy and numeracy alongside a personalised curriculum offer. This initiative, supported by Thriving Communities, has successfully re-engaged learners and fostered positive relationships with wider partners, contributing to long-term benefits, including attendance. • Learners participating in the 'Skills Academy' also engage in health and wellbeing activities, which help maintain their overall engagement with school. • The school are active participants in the authority 'Work Out' programme. The school relentlessly push for as many places for their learners in this and as a result are currently co-facilitating 17 work experience placements, providing learners with practical opportunities to develop skills and sustain school engagement. An example of success is observed within the S4 boys' group, where learners have demonstrated increased motivation to attend school and a clearer understanding of its importance.

		• Weekly one-to-one sessions are provided for S1 learners to offer personalised support and guidance. An attendance booklet is used to help learners set personal targets, aims, and aspirations, reinforcing the importance of regular attendance. This is also shared at home with parent/carers. • Learners with care experience receive dedicated support from a care experience lead, who closely monitors attendance and attainment. Collaboration with the 'Champions Board' ensures comprehensive support beyond the school environment. • Young carers are also provided with tailored support to help them balance their responsibilities and maintain consistent school attendance.
Primary school Roll: 139 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 87% Q2 6% Q3 C Q4 C Q5 0%	• The most powerful universal approach is the unwavering, relentless, and collaborative approach to improving attendance. In alignment with the school's vision and values, positive relationships between learners, their families and the school are valued strongly, and this ultimately makes universal and targeted approaches more successful. • All learners in the school have a key adult to discuss any issues they may be experiencing and have regular check ins. • Attendance issues are picked up early through the key adults and this helps support the learner and their family in a more responsive and timely approach. • The school report that over time, a shared vision around attendance being everyone's responsibility has been embedded, and learners are motivated to improve their own attendance. The value of attending school and understanding the positive impact it can have on learners' achievement and attainment is intrinsically motivating.	• It is important to note that most universal approaches can be adapted to become targeted as appropriate. For example, the walking bus is open to all learners, but it can also be targeted towards individuals or families. It may also target groups of learners within the 80-90% attendance bracket, or learners experiencing a temporary change in circumstances which affects their attendance. The offer is adapted based on the needs of the learner and their families at that time. The walking bus scope has been further extended over the last year to include three different routes, which reaches more families. Almost all learners in this group have improved their attainment due to increased attendance and reduced late comings.

	Consequently, learners in the school want to improve their attendance, both individually, as a class and as a school. • An example of this is the support and encouragement from the school for older learners to take responsibility, as appropriate, to get to school. Any barriers such as uniform or breakfast are removed by the school, through their breakfast and uniform provision, so older learners only need to focus on physically getting to the school door. • Extrinsic motivation is also reported to be an important part of the school's improvement. There are regular whole school celebrations for attendance, including for those with 95% or above, as well as class prizes for the highest attendance. Certificates and stickers are issued at these celebrations which are highly regarded by the learners. • There are also motivating, termly challenges involving all classes in the school, and designed by the learners themselves. The day of the challenges are purposely unknown to the learners, so the incentive is there to ensure they attend school every day and do not miss out. • The school also report that continuous and consistent positive messaging about attendance is important. The learners, parent/carers and staff are aware of the high expectations and the goal of 95% attendance. This messaging and encouragement is noted through various methods of communication, including at parent/carers evenings/events.	• There are also 'attendance groups' which consist of targeted learners who are on personalised attendance charts for four-weekly cycles. Through monthly meetings with the leadership team, learners are identified for the attendance monitoring group, so participation changes each month depending on need. Learners are fully involved in setting their personal targets within the charts and contribute to their own evaluations over the four-week period. • Targeted learners also have their own key adult within the school. These are usually school assistants who check in with them daily. This helps to build trust and positive relationships and supports early identification of any initial signs of attendance issues.
Secondary school Roll: 1242 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 4% Q2 28% Q3 38%	• Universal strategies include daily communication with families, clear messaging on the importance of attendance (ABCs), and linking attendance to reward trips. • Staff, learners, and parent/carers are engaged through regular updates and celebratory events.	• Targeted strategies include revised attendance letters, risk matrix reviews, and small group interventions for learners below 90%. • The 'Achievement Hub and Outreach' programmes provide bespoke support for those with significant non-attendance, alongside preventative work from the Campus Cop and Universal Connections.

Q4 21% Q5 6%		
Primary School Roll: 249 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 50% Q2 13% Q3 18% Q4 13% Q5 3%	• The school has embedded a clear attendance policy, now in its second year, as a priority within the Standards and Quality Improvement Plan. • Daily Emotion Check-ins support learner wellbeing and early identification of barriers. • The school environment has been shaped to create a safe, calm, and positive culture where learners feel a sense of belonging, which supports attendance.	• Targeted strategies include sharing reasons for absence with relevant staff to ensure continuity of support, utilising the authority's counselling service when required, and engaging the Family Hub for bespoke family support. Although currently underutilised, this resource offers opportunities for closer collaboration with the Family Support Worker. • The school also works closely with a neighbouring school to share community information and strategies.
Primary school Roll: 163 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 20% Q2 17% Q3 8% Q4 11% Q5 41%	• We engaged with Trauma Informed Schools and Communities UK's training. This proved to be transformational. Our Positive Behaviour Policy changed to become a Relationships and Well-Being Policy. We worked towards the award for Trauma Informed Schools. • We engaged with our Educational Psychology Team and participated in lots of professional learning. This resulted in a significant change in culture. We moved away from walkie-talkies and dysregulation and began to 'meet children where they are' as suggested by Dan Hughes. • Walkie-talkies became obsolete as staff became more confident. We introduced scripted language with no shaming and no shouting. We created a counselling room for parents and a 'chill-ville' area for children. All of this resulted in much calmer children. • We have a strong sense of belonging within the school. Our children want to be here. They feel safe, secure and valued. We put children's rights at the heart of everything we do. In 2023, we achieved our Trauma Informed School Accreditation. • Our curricular offer focuses on developing the 5 'C's - critical thinking, creativity, communication, collaboration and character. We follow the 'MakerSpace' philosophy where children are encouraged to engage	• We established a walking bus. This was born out of issues left from the pandemic and trying to get children back to school. It has been very effective including improving the attendance of one child who went from 44% P4 to 94% by P7. • We have also worked with our local authority central team leading on attendance and used the resources created by Forth Valley and West Lothian collaborative. • We use individual approaches for each individual family. Our starting point is not one of blame but 'What can we do to help?' Parental mental health can be an issue so it is about helping.

	with real life problems. We incorporate two 'MakerSpace' challenges into our interdisciplinary learning each year. One parent commented during one of the challenges when referring to her son, " He's so ill but I can't keep him off. He won't stay off." This reflects our aim to make sure children want to be at school because they are engaged as does our engagement with Dr Deborah Kidd's 'Curriculum of Hope'. • We work with Daydream Believers to present children with real-life dilemmas. Our aim is to ensure our children are 'bothered'. They become 'change agents' where empathy is turned into active compassion. • Alongside this we have focused on our outdoor learning offer. This started with our P1 class spending a day a week outdoors. Their teacher had been Forest School trained. Our parents were so impressed by their children's enthusiasm that they campaigned for a similar experience in P2. Now every class has similar outdoor learning experiences. It is often described as the favourite day of the week. • We have embedded play pedagogy. We have changed learning environments across the school (P1 and P2 play focus older classes have flexible seating and play remains an important part of learning.) This has resulted in settled children due to their needs being met. • All of this provides a pull to school. Children have engaging experiences and predictability.	
Primary school Roll: 273 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 13% Q2 32% Q3 30%	• Clear communication with parent/carers; weekly noticeboard, newsletter every two months which highlights current attendance for each class as well as the info graphics. • Robust follow up where learners are absent. Health and well-being officer (3 days a week) follows up and has very good relationships with families. • Every month custom report from SEEMiS highlights every child under 90% and look at patterns. Any learner whose absence is deteriorating a letter is sent out inviting parent/carers for a chat. Depending on circumstances sometimes this invitation is by phone	• Robust follow up where learners are absent. • Health and well-being officer (3 days a week) follows up and has very good relationships with families. • Every month custom report from SEEMiS highlights every child under 90% and look at patterns. • Regular check ins with health and well-being officer. Some parent/carers will go directly to

Q4 13% Q5 12%	call rather than letter. The purpose of the chat is to discuss how the school can support better attendance. • Headteacher always at the gate to welcome learners in and to have informal chats with learners and learners. This allows informal communication. • Ensure activities are spread across the week. e.g. 31 minutes - learners get to choose what activity they would like to do - nails, football, art, etc run by staff. • Homework/social club for P6 and P7 on Wednesdays and Thursdays. • Ethos of the school - nurturing environment. Staff relationships play a large part.	HWB Officer to explain absence and discuss support. • Collaborative multi-agency approach e.g. there is a Family Support Councillor each Friday, Educational Psychologist, local authority 'Engaging Learners Service'.
Primary school Roll: 236 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 34% Q2 36% Q3 7% Q4 3% Q5 17%	• Implementation of LAs attendance policy which has provided clarity re expectations and approaches in relation to improving attendance and engaging with families. The policy ensures approaches are coherent and consistent. • A focus on school culture and the health & wellbeing curriculum to ensure the school is a genuinely welcoming place with supportive relationships and a pro-active approach to ensuring wellbeing e.g. the school has in place an emotional literacy programme to supporting understanding and empathy. • Use of a learner health & wellbeing questionnaire at the start of each school year to identify support needs with results analysed and follow-up actions implemented for individuals as required. The questionnaire is repeated in May to measure improvements. • The school has been developing an outdoor learning programme, although progress has been limited recently, as part of its efforts to provide engaging learning experiences to enhance the 'pull to school'.	• The main targeted strategies are: *'How Am I doing?' conversations - a pro-active approach to supporting learners' wellbeing, emotional regulation and happiness at school. This approach involves conversations with a 'key adult' every 2 weeks over a six-week block, exploring strategies that will make a difference. Families are part of the process. Some learners e.g. learners who are looked after or are on the child protection register, are involved in the process beyond a six-week block. • Emotional literacy support – targeted input with learners and families – helping parent/carers get learners to school in the morning. • Forest Schools learning for targeted groups, including boys from the Traveller community. • Partnership working and engagement with other agencies e.g. engagement with Social Work on first day of day of absence, for learners engaged with the agency

Secondary school Roll: 1534 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 53% Q2 25% Q3 10% Q4 8% Q5 1%	• Principal teachers of learner support are rigorous in implementing the LA policy – they have a clearly understood role and undertake regular check-ins with year head, relevant depute head teachers and other staff as required. • School events and special activities are planned to encourage attendance at the end of school terms e.g. Christmas. • There is regular communication with parent/carers and young people about the importance of attendance. This includes a focus in newsletters, at assemblies and in conversations. The importance of attending school has a much higher profile now. The school links attendance and attainment. • The school has engaged with the CIRCLE framework – there are clear expectations about environment and relationships across the school. • The school has updated its procedures for late coming, with expectations for learners and for staff, shared. • Support with school uniform is open to everyone, removing any stigma. • Learners have been consulted on uniform with changes introduced in line with their views e.g. hoodies are now part of the uniform.	• The school has created a team of 6 learner and family support workers who undertake 1:1 and/or group work with target families and young people to address barriers that impact attendance. This includes work with target P7 learners from associated primary schools as part of an early intervention approach to improving attendance. The team also signposts families to other services/sources of support. Attendance is a criteria for accessing enhanced transition P7-S1. • The school builds on P7 attendance work by having a priority focus on S1 to maximise attendance and maintain improvements into S2 and, in time, beyond. Learner and family support workers and principal teachers of learner support lead this work. • Team around the family meetings focus on all learners in family, regardless of the school they attend. • Targeted young people are supported to travel to school independently and there is support to ensure access to the Young Scot Card. • Two years ago, the school took a highly targeted approach to address a group of 'corridor surfers', all S3 learners. The approach included engagement with the young people and their families to identify and address reason for non-engagement learning. Personalised plans were created and a range of supports, including around pathways, were put in place. The majority of these learners are now in S5, the remaining two gained early
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		entry to college, and all have already achieved at least 1 national 5 qualification.
Secondary school Roll: 1201 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 11% Q2 22% Q3 12% Q4 13% Q5 40%	• A refreshed strategy was created in session 2023-24 to reinforce and realign roles and responsibilities regarding attendance.	• The 'Safeguarding Wellbeing and Attendance Team' support internal truancy and ensure our young people are in classes during the day. • Family Link Worker – supporting targeted learners from quintile one and learners entitled to free school meals to improve their attendance. • Weekly House Attendance Meetings uses school data to focus on key themes/groups as required. • SLT focus meetings/surgeries – focus on quintile one.
Secondary school Roll: 662 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 39% Q2 21% Q3 17% Q4 13% Q5 10%	• Based on 'Included, Engaged and Involved 1', we have embedded a welcoming culture and ethos which includes: • School values • High expectations, including the wearing of the whole school uniform • Consistency of staff approaches and high visibility of pastoral and SLT at key points throughout the day (staff have bought into the 'values' being promoted) • Support for wellbeing support e.g. after school clubs etc. • These are all underpinned by systems and processes: • Systems for support at transition points throughout the day • 3 group texts a day to parent/carers when a learner is absent – at period 1, 3 and another at period 6, if at end of day call parent/carers have not confirmed then it is marked as TBC, but the aim to have no TBC at end of school • Learners can only come side doors – all pastoral and SLT staff are at these doors; one way system, no-one can access school apart from past staff • 'Jackets off' in the building rule, so uniforms can be seen – this also	• Inclusion base provides support for the lowest attenders to non-attenders; this was set up to mitigate 10 learners leaving with 0 tariff points; bespoke timetables. • 21 learners on the register – no more than 6 at a time. • Staff liaise with departments to set level 3 and 4 course work which is completed in the base. • Courses are 'RAG' rated. • Resulted in improved attendance and no learners leaving with zero attainment. • PEF inclusion workers develop relationships to provide a 'pull' to school. • 'ARONA' – 'at risk of not attaining' – lists are created for the whole school and reviewed regularly.

	eliminates the need for class teachers to tackle this in class •When a learner is late they go directly to class and marked late by teacher •Informing parent/carers of absence as soon as possible, parent/carers know how the systems work •Addressing human errors – this was dealt with by SLT talking to staff and placing high importance on the accuracy of registration e.g. 'Incompletes' – where a teacher has not pressed 'save' • Coupled with care: •Relationships •Learners in general want to be here •Classrooms are calm, staff are supported throughout the day •Magic breakfast school – anyone can have breakfast, staff volunteer along with senior learners and food is offered in the communal 'street' to all learners	
Primary school Roll: 264 SIMD Profile Q1 6% Q2 20% Q3 48% Q4 2% Q5 24%	• School is welcoming, learners are very highly regarded, nurtured and cared for. Learners tell us they feel valued and want to come to school. This is supported by consistent practice, strong partnerships, and a focus on wellbeing and engagement. • For attendance between 80 and 90% a supportive (standardised) letter reminding parent/carers of the importance of attendance is sent with parent/carers invited to speak if they would like to and a reminder that attendance will be monitored again at a stated point, where we would be looking for improvement. A follow up letter is sent if there is no improvement or small improvement at the next monitoring point inviting parent/carers to meet. • For attendance below 80% a bespoke letter is sent inviting parent/carers to a meeting or phone call.	• Being child-centred, knowing our learners, their strengths, interests etc. This is supported by strong partnership with parent/carers. • All staff support the welcoming ethos of the school and the importance of attendance. Any concerns with attendance are addressed through supportive phone calls, meetings and involving relevant partners if required.
Secondary school Roll: 762 Other urban area	• The school carried out an audit with pastoral to identify areas for improvement and worked with staff on attendance and their role in improving attendance. They were able to identify what the universal approaches were already in place Tracking, SEEMiS coding, categorising attendance – this is useful to support us in categorise.	• Creation of a proforma (called 'learner attendance profile') to drill down into the reasons for absence. Although time consuming it was useful as involved attainment tracking, free school meals, Scottish National Standardised Assessments,

SIMD Profile Q1 52% Q2 13% Q3 18% Q4 5% Q5 12%	• Wellbeing – “AW the Gether” approach which involved re-zoning personal support rooms to allow pastoral staff to visit each morning and linked this into attendance. • Used the Glasgow Motivation and Wellbeing Profile tool to identify other factors that would allow us to improve wellbeing and therefore attendance at school. • Improved focus on learning and teaching, adult supervision allowed us to improve on learners safety, toilet duty each period, radio duty each period (took away time out room), S1-S3 learners being taught in English and Maths in their primary grouping, introduction of double periods across the Broad General to reduce the number of transitions in a day, ensuring that there are no split teachers as far as is possible (try to have a maximum of 15 teachers). • The removal of the bell to reduce anxiety, late duty in the morning (Depute headteacher and pastoral teacher each morning) to speak to learners about why they are late (e.g. identifying young carers etc.).	referrals, demerits etc to identify patterns from this. • Not just using attendance percentage but total of days missed as more meaningful. • Project focused on learners 70-84% attendance range, SIMD 1 and an ASN. 10 learners identified and worked on barriers to attendance with an attendance mentor. • Changed the format of traditional TAC meetings as it doesn't work in the context of attendance. The school now identify the issues prior to the meeting (e.g. through parent/learner surveys) so that the attendance forum meeting can focus on how to support. There isn't a minute as such – the plan is produced at the meeting. • Home visits have been used flexibly and supportively. • We have allocated a PSA to work on attendance solely including a vulnerable learners list.
Primary school Roll: 272 SIMD Profile Q1 45% Q2 18% Q3 9% Q4 12% Q5 17%	• Very positive ethos within the school, all staff know learners very well, daily check ins, Health & Wellbeing curriculum has focus on positive attitudes to school. • Pupil Attitudes to Self and School survey data used effectively to identify targeted support, attendance is regularly mentioned in newsletters and assemblies, SLT are alerted if there are any concerns immediately, actively respond to changes in trends.	• Kitbag, personalised targets, soft starts, flexibility in curriculum choice, staged intervention targets, regular TAC meetings and contact with parent/carers, 1:1 interventions such as Lego and art therapy.

Secondary school Roll: 863 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 12% Q2 31% Q3 12% Q4 19% Q5 27%	• Creation of a whole school attendance framework outlining every member of staff's role in improving attendance, including non-teaching staff. The school also updates its attendance letters and promoting positive attendance communication materials to highlight the impact of missed day for learners. • A new daily monitoring system was implemented to ensure oversight of reasons for absence and parental follow up. This is generated following the morning and afternoon SEEMiS texts. Finally, the school has adopted a more rigorous approach to coding in line with new local authority guidance for consistency.	• An S4 skills group was introduced because of attendance data when the cohort was in in S3. The group has re-engaged persistent non-attenders where school staff come to the learners to help them achieve qualifications and improve attendance. • There is a significant focus on the desired destination for these learners and Skills Development Scotland heavily support this work.
Secondary school Roll: 319 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 54% Q2 26% Q3 9% Q4 10% Q5 0%	• A strategic change initiative was implemented to address learners' attendance, focus and engagement concerns through a whole staff approach focusing on using learner voice to improve relationships and mental health and well-being across the school. This involved improving the school's culture and ethos through developing a cluster and school level attendance policy as part of our promoting positive behaviour and relationships policy. • Key drivers include; - Rights Respecting Schools Award journey from Bronze to Gold (2021-2025) - National/Cluster Focus on improving attendance and having a shared policy. - Tracking and monitoring of attendance data to identify target focus groups of learners and implement strategies to remove barriers affecting engagement.	• Issuing attendance updates at parent/carers' nights. • Senior Management Team meeting with parent/carers and building relationships to support parental involvement. • Early Intervention - check ins, supportive letters, meetings to stop escalation, tracking and monitoring, termly updates shared across the school. • Partnership working - Educational Psychology, Social Work, Children's Reporter, Virtual school, We Aspire. • Highlighting importance of attendance with the learners e.g. termly certificates highlight % improvement made, attendance assemblies throughout the year and bespoke attendance charts implemented in class-by-class teacher.

		• Targeted interventions - GIRFEC, Circle of Inclusion, Playbotics, Art Therapy, Children's Health Scotland, Let's Introduce Anxiety Management parent/carer workshops - sleep therapy, Solihull approach, transport provision, practical support around morning routines, bespoke timetables. • Welcoming late comers, class welcomers, identified key staff - met at door, alternative soft start. • Addressing anxiety or emotional needs. • Promoting Breakfast club, class snack tins, Amazon - fresh free fruit, daily. • Using SEEMiS and LA dashboard attendance information.
Secondary school Roll: 122 Remote rural area SIMD Profile Q1 c Q2 44 Q3 23% Q4 30% Q5 0%	• Strong relationships with young people and their families mean that school staff know families well. • The school follows the local authority policy, with bespoke approaches for individual young people and their families. If there is a change in attendance, guidance staff will discuss this with the young person. • Phone calls are made to parent/carers/carers if attendance is 90% or below.	• These approaches are bespoke to the needs of the young person. Monitoring of attendance data identifies when attendance decreases and late coming increases and if there is a need to provide a more targeted approach. Discussion with the young person and their parent/carers/carers takes place to identify the causes of this change. • The SHANARRI indicators are used to explore underpinning reasons and to plan supports and interventions. This includes counselling referrals, clear communication with parent/carers and partnership working, for example, with 'Home to Highland' for learners and young people who have experience of care. • At times, whole family discussions have really helped the young person to better understand

		the importance of attending and engaging in school.
Primary school Roll: 161 Other urban area SIMD Profile Q1 24% Q2 49% Q3 19% Q4 5% Q5 c	• Attendance policy – reviewing attendance monthly and speaking to parent/carers. • 'Excellence and Equity' meetings between senior leadership and class teachers have a focus on attendance.	• Attendance ambassadors are part of our PEF plan and formed of learners from quintile one for whom attendance can be a struggle. • These learners are monitored daily with a weekly reward given. They have taken part in attendance assemblies and have helped to share information with learners.
Primary school Roll: 218 Large urban area SIMD Profile Q1 85% Q2 6% Q3 4% Q4 4% Q5 c	• A strong, positive ethos and trauma-informed practice underpin the school's success. • Universal strategies driving high attendance include: • Clear, consistent messaging of high expectations across newsletters, assemblies, induction and daily interactions • Celebration of excellent attendance, including certificates, medals, assemblies and recognition during award ceremonies • Motivational class rewards (e.g. P5/4 earning the first slot at roller-skating club) • Regular communication with families that reinforces the importance of daily attendance • Strong relationships and predictable routines, contributing to a culture where learners feel safe, welcome and ready to learn. • These strategies reinforce that attendance is central to learning, wellbeing and achievement.	• Staff know families extremely well, enabling early, personalised intervention. • Targeted approaches include: • Direct communication and relationship-building with families • Phone calls, follow-up conversations and attendance meetings • Individualised interventions with bespoke targeted actions, which can include flexible curriculum options. • The school also sends recognition letters for improved attendance, reinforcing motivation. • Attendance is monitored rigorously through: • Weekly and monthly analysis • Case-by-case reviews by class teachers and senior leadership team • Recognition certificates for improvement • Regular scrutiny of patterns across cohorts
Community school	• Attendance monitoring is in the school calendar and is monthly.	• Team Around the Child meetings • Wellbeing Practitioner input

Roll: 87 Remote rural area SIMD Profile Q3 100%	• Figures discussed at principal teacher meetings and letters are sent home to everyone sitting under 90% (unless there are exceptional circumstances). • We also regularly remind parent/carers about not taking holidays during term time (bulletins, handbook). • We also use the local authority 'Attendance Forum' for those with very poor attendance, as well as referrals to the Children's Reporter.	• Secondary Counsellor • Personalised timetables • Phased returns • Attendance Forum • Input from Children's Reporter/Social Work
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Appendix 3: References, further reading and resources

References

Dräger, J., Klein, M., & Sosu, E. M. (2025) Does the impact of pupil absences on achievement depend on their timing? *American Educational Research Journal*, 62(5), 872-908. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.3102/00028312251347666>

Scottish Government (2025) *School attendance, absence and exclusions statistics 2024-25*. Available at: [School attendance, absence and exclusions statistics 2024-25 - gov.scot](https://www.gov.scot/publications/school-attendance-absence-and-exclusions-statistics-2024-25/pages/introduction.aspx)

Education Scotland – Improving Attendance in Scotland

- [Improving Attendance: understanding the issues report](#)
- [Attendance in Scottish schools - a sketchnote](#)
- [Culture, systems and practice](#)
- [Partnership and multi-agency working](#)
- [Engaging parents and families](#)
- [Putting children and young people's views at the centre](#)
- [Development of plans, policies and guidance](#)
- [Effective use of data](#)
- [Effective strategies](#)
- [The Learning Conversations: Attendance](#)
- [Attendance Matters at Smithycroft Secondary School Podcast – Staff](#)
- [Attendance Matters at Smithycroft Secondary School Podcast – Learner](#)

Scottish Government - Included, Engaged and Involved series

- [Included, engaged and involved part 1: promoting and managing school attendance - gov.scot](#)
- [Included, engaged and involved part 2: preventing and managing school exclusions - gov.scot](#)
- [Included, Engaged and Involved Part 3: A Relationships and Rights-based Approach to Physical Intervention in Schools A Relationships and Rights-based Approach to Physical Intervention in Schools](#)

HMIE – effective practice

- [Working with families to improve attendance at West Coats Primary School](#)
- [Effective approaches to improving attendance at Wallace Hall Academy](#)

Scottish Government Published Data

- [Fortnightly School Absence Information 2024-25 | Tableau Public](#)
- [Attendance and absence - School attendance, absence and exclusions statistics 2024-25 - gov.scot](#)
- [Attendance and absence - Summary statistics for schools in Scotland 2024 - gov.scot](#)