

# Attendance Strategy

## 2023/24



The attendance strategy for 2023/24 is rooted in the belief that:

- Good attendance remains a key catalyst for all other elements of school. This includes outcomes, student wellbeing and a strong school culture.
- The aspiration for the school lies within incremental development over longer durations of time, taking the school beyond its best previous attendance rates Pre-Covid.
- A strategy should represent the current challenges faced in education, and around the nuance of school attendance/absence.
- An effective strategy moving forward should represent continued growth from previous developments, whilst recognising elements of practice that require refinement.

### Attendance target

Last year 2022/23	Key performance targets		
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26
92%	93%	94.5%	95.5%

Within three years Shenfield High School aspire to a whole school attendance target of 96%. This equates to 7.5 days lost on average per year per child, resulting in 37.5 lost learning hours.

### Current Performance measures

#### End of year comparatives

Absence – 2022/23						
SHS	Essex		East		National	
%	%	Difference	%	Difference	%	Difference
8	9	1	8.9	0.9	9.1	1.1

#### Whole school figures

ATTEDANCE DATA	2022/23
<b>Overall Yr7 - 11</b>	<b>92.0%</b>
Yr7	93.0%
Yr8	90.5%
Yr9	92.5%
Yr10	92.0%
Yr11	91.7%
<b>Absence</b>	<b>8.0%</b>
Authorised	5.3%
Unauthorised	2.7%

Year 8 into 9 remain a key year group for poor attendance, and an anomaly within key stage three attendance patterns of previous

This cohort contains a number of exceptional circumstances and students with emotional based school avoidance.

### Key group statistics with gaps identified

<b>Boys</b>	91.9%
<b>Girls</b>	91.7%
<b>LAC</b>	73.0%
<b>Non LAC</b>	91.9%
LAC Gap	18.9%
<b>PP</b>	85.4%
<b>Non PP</b>	93.3%
PP Gap	7.9%
<b>SEND</b>	89.4%
<b>Non SEND</b>	92.8%
SEND Gap	3.4%
<b>EAL</b>	92.0%
<b>Non EAL</b>	91.4%
EAL Gap	-0.6%
<b>FSM</b>	85.5%
<b>Non FSM</b>	93.0%
FSM Gap	7.5%
<b>EHCP</b>	83.1%
<b>Non EHCP</b>	91.8%
EHCP Gap	8.7%

.The data above acknowledges the key gaps for a number of cohorts.

Whilst the difference for LAC remains high, this is due to a heavily impacting factor in a weak data set. Significant gaps for PP/FSM and EHCP cohorts are more pressing due to the volumes these data sets represent. Concerns regarding these overarching figures track back into a number of key students with PA (Persistently Absent) or SA (Severely absent) status.

Previous comparatives of key groups indicate SHS to ride national trend, without significant difference.

### Persistent Absence by demographic

<b>Persistent Absence – 2022/23</b>						
<b>SHS</b>	<b>Essex</b>		<b>East</b>		<b>National</b>	
%	%	Difference	%	Difference	%	Difference
24.85	26.4	1.55	27.4	2.55	27.1	2.25

<b>Overall PA (&lt;90%)</b>	<b>24.9%</b>
% of PP that are PA	49.5%
% of Non-PP that are PA	18.1%
PP PA Gap	-31.4%
% of FSM that are PA	53.9%
% of Non-FSM that are PA	18.7%
FSM PA Gap	-35.2%
% of SEN that are PA	33.1%
% of Non-SEN that are PA	21.5%
SEN PA Gap	-11.6%
% of EHCP that are PA	37.5%
% of Non-EHCP that are PA	23.4%
EHCP Gap	-14.1%

Data identified above gives a clear indication where strategic improvement to whole school and cohort absence needs to be targeted. The gaps identified above must be seen as inhibitive to having positive impact upon student outcomes. The rate of PA for disadvantaged students will need to be a clear focus identified within any strategy for improvement.

Whilst we identify key areas for improvement, it is also important to recognise that Shenfield High School operates beyond local and national data in limiting its Persistent absenteeism.

## 2022/23 Strategy – Analysis

Throughout the previous academic year, a much renewed focus and strategy was implemented upon whole school attendance processes. Whilst this proved efficient at improving practice and ensuring SHS remained above national and local attendance rates, it remains vital that its effectiveness is reviewed.

### **Strengths – For retention**

1. Systems were implemented that RAG rated each student based on key thresholds. This allowed key thresholds to be reviewed periodically via Attendance and Pastoral teams.
2. Key protocols were implemented regarding home visits, improving safeguarding measures around vulnerable absence. Involvement of DSL within direct Attendance meetings.
3. Data analysis methods were developed that allowed frequent comparisons to national and local data, recognising trends and efforts made to raise attendance.
4. Student and parent communication became systematic, raising the profile and awareness of current attendance rates for each student. The status of 'attendance' was improved around school with tutor support.

### **Areas for development**

1. Consistency of actions within the strategy – Regular meetings with PMs, Follow up actions confirmed (AWL, PN, etc)
2. Further implementation of a reward culture around attendance – Use of Year group and House assemblies.
3. Collaboration with other key stakeholders for strategic intervention for key demographics and PA gaps – PP CO-Ordinator, SENCo and team
4. Review of absence Authorisation

## Opportunities - Attendance developments since last strategy

- Implementation of a Deputy Headteacher working with AHT: Behaviour and Attendance.
- Employment of Attendance support officer
- Structural changes to sign/in and sign out process for attendance.
- More suitable working space for Attendance operations
- Reviewed Sixth for practice (Oversight of AHT: Sixth form)

## 3 Year framework and initial enquiries

The processes around attendance will allow accurate and timely monitoring in order to facilitate impactful actions. **OPERATIONS** will be clear and well utilised in the pursuit of strong attendance.

Our **PEOPLE** within the school will play an active role in curating a culture where attendance is known, valued and at the heart of wellbeing and outcomes. Stakeholders across all remits will have an impact on positive attendance.

The culture of the school will ensure its full **COMMUNITY** is recognised for positive attendance, and its role within a high performing institute. The impact of positive attendance will be rewarded and celebrated.

The **CURRICULUM** delivered and the outcomes it achieves will be supported through the value of strong attendance. Stakeholders will all be familiar with the extensive correlation between the two.

### Processes and Outcomes

Are we adept in using the tools currently utilised?

Do we have essential tools for challenging and progressing attendance?

Do we have a clear and accurate flow of information?

Does information transform to action?

Are we clear on which actions occur at prescribed thresholds? What are our thresholds?

Are actions having impact?

### People

Do all staff understand attendance?

Are our key staff clear on their roles?

Are staff empowered and skilled enough to carry out processes?

Are the right people involved at the right times?

Do key stakeholders drive attendance within sub-groups to close gaps?

Do our parents understand attendance systems and expectations?

Do we understand the reasons for absence at all thresholds?

Are we targeting/supporting the most at risk students and families?

### Culture and Community

How present is the topic of attendance in day to day operations?

What short term incentives inspire change?

How do we celebrate high levels of overall attendance or improvement?

How is a culture of strong attendance insisted upon during transition?

How effective are our messages and signals around attendance?

### Curriculum and Outcomes

Do we define links between attendance and outcomes using external research and internal data?

How do we extend this information into the understanding of all stakeholders?

## Key strategies employed

1	Initiation of a full attendance review via the local authority attendance specialist	
	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Establishing clear thresholds for action from Local Authority advice.</li> <li>Assess quality of communications.</li> <li>Review effectiveness of pursuing legal action and prior processes (18 week windows).</li> <li>Ensure a holistic overview of attendance procedures that can be clearly identified through a one-page overview.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Success questions</b></p> <p>Are our staff confident and fluent in the systems? Are our systems consistent across year groups? Are we closing the gaps for absence?</p>
2	Refine tracking systems to ensure clear, accurate and empowering data, in turn informing strong strategies.	
	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ensure information systems identify key target groups to Heads of year, allowing strategic planning.</li> <li>Ensure Year teams are effective in impacting attendance through intervention and support.</li> <li>Ensure other key stakeholders (EG PP CO-Ordinator, SENCo) are informed and able to impact attendance of cohorts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Success questions</b></p> <p>What is the impact of target groups over time? Is data readily available, on both a broken and whole school scale? Are we closing the gaps for absence/PA within vulnerable groups?</p>
3	Clarify key responsibilities through effective attendance tasking.	
	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <p>main workload and volume of activities undertaken clearly. Understand the individual responsibilities of stakeholders. Identify and stand key gaps in provision. Monitor and review effectiveness of key tasks.</p>	<p><b>Success questions</b></p> <p>Are staff clear and empowered within their role? Are all staff trained and supported effectively to carry out key tasks?</p>
4	Ensure attendance remains a constant presence in reward and recognition events, creating a positive culture for school attendance.	
	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Creation of a school calendar for attendance recognition events (Communications, Events, etc)</li> <li>Ensure collaboration between attendance stakeholders and House Co-ordinator to ensure effective house competitions.</li> <li>Ensure wider staff feel empowered to motivate students towards positive attendance.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Success questions</b></p> <p>Do students know their attendance when positive? Do students feel their attendance makes a difference? Do form time activities empower and enrich students to understand the impact of attendance on attainment?</p>
5	Ensure clear processes exist for mitigating 'emotional based school avoidance' and its impact on outcomes	
	<p><b>Implementation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effective use of Attendance concern profiles</li> <li>Understand LA guidance with clarity and purpose.</li> <li>Ensure medical evidence is secure where available.</li> <li>Utilise LA processes in order to support school improvement.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Success questions</b></p> <p>Do we feel students have the support available as required? Are we astute in our use of LA materials and systems (Infolink etc)? Do we have a strong yet challenging relationship with the LA? Do we have students suffering long term absence with lacking actions?</p>

## 2023/24 Milestones

1. Achieve a whole school attendance of 93% this year, denoting 1% improvement upon 2022/23
2. Raise Year 9 attendance to 91.5%, indicating a 1% increase from 2022/23
3. Decrease whole school Persistent absenteeism to below 20%
4. Decrease the PPG Persistent absenteeism gap to no more than 20%

### Progress towards milestones

1. Achieve a whole school attendance of 93% this year, denoting 1% improvement upon 2022/23					
Target	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1
93%	92.6%				
Periodic review					
2. Raise Year 9 attendance to 91.5%, indicating a 1% increase from 2022/23					
Target	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1
91.5%	90.2%				
Periodic review					
3. Decrease whole school Persistent absenteeism to below 20%					
Target	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1
<20%	19.1%				
Periodic review					
4. Decrease the PPG Persistent absenteeism gap to no more than 20%					
Target	Autumn 1	Autumn 2	Spring 1	Spring 2	Summer 1
<20%	16%				
Periodic review					