



ATTENDANCE MENTORING

Helping children learn how to attend school

Attendance4Learning®

Some children find it difficult to attend school

There can be many reasons for this: anxiety, health, mental health, loss of routine, family matters, or other reasons. **Attendance Mentoring supports children with worries and anxiety** about attending school. It does this by delivering three principles:



Attendance for learning

Fulfilling potential by developing an intrinsic love for learning



Compassionate support

Getting close to understand, to build (epistemic) trust



Enabling change

Believing in ability, to develop the mentee's confidence and self-esteem

A new relationship to change

Children with attendance difficulties can also have behavioural difficulties. From a developmental psychology perspective, behaviour and attendance difficulties evolve in the same way (e.g. through social learning that takes place within the family, school or wider community).

Mentoring helps children with attendance difficulties think differently about attending school. Mentors provide children with a safe space to discover what learning means to them, to explore

barriers for being on time and achieving regular attendance. Thinking together with a mentor (mentalization) helps children to feel differently about these areas and creates the necessary context for change and achieving personalised goals.

Thinking differently – the importance of metacognition and self-regulation

Metacognition and self-regulation approaches help children to think about their own learning more clearly, often teaching them specific strategies for planning, monitoring, and evaluating their learning*. This process applies to teaching children the necessary behaviours and attributes for regularly attending school.

*Education Endowment Foundation (2021) – ‘Metacognition and Self-Regulated Learning – Guidance Report’.

Mentors provide children ‘thinking space’ to explore and discover new ways of thinking about attendance and putting strategies into action.

Time with children

Mentors have weekly contact time with their mentees. Self-regulation and metacognition strategies are aided by an ‘Attendance Planner’. This helps focus on areas linked to attendance, being prepared and being on time; specifically, it helps thinking about the following:

- About me, discovering my likes and dislikes
- Understanding my wishes and feelings
- Reviewing attendance, punctuality, and linking these to achieving aspirations
- Understanding the importance of sleep
- Thinking about getting organised (e.g. for the school day and week)
- Discussing the importance of routines; and
- How I get to school (e.g. exploring routes and methods)

Mentors support their mentees to monitor and evaluate their own learning of new strategies, behaviours, and attributes for attending school. This includes:

- Thinking about attendance and punctuality since the last session
- Teaching of metacognitive strategies
- Modelling thinking to demonstrate metacognitive strategies
- Reflecting upon strengths/areas of improvement, planning to overcome current difficulties

With explicit teaching and feedback, children are encouraged to use their strategies independently and habitually – children can apply these when faced with the possibility of future challenges.

Time with parents/carers

There is a well-evidenced* link between parents being involved in their child’s life and academic attainment. Parents are children’s first educators, and they play a vital part in any child’s learning, that is, from early years through to the end of their formal school and college years – this includes learning about attendance.

Regarding mentoring, parents support this from the outset, and especially so in helping children implement new learning, behaviours and attributes, for improving attendance. Parents are also integral to reviews, sharing challenges, sharing achievements.

Parents are provided a ‘Parent Handbook’ to assist them in their support of mentoring.

* Parentkind (2021) Parentkind’s Blueprint for Parent-Friendly Schools.

Impact

Attendance Mentoring helps children **shift from irregular to regular school attendance with improved punctuality**, and mitigates the risks of pupil/student absence (e.g. attainment and safeguarding). Other benefits include reduced anxiety; improved mental health, self-esteem, and confidence; positive attitude/enjoyment of learning; improved home learning/commitment to homework; greater partnering from parents/carers, and overall, an increased interest in school life.

From Irregular

Pink and orange = absence. Yellow = Late.

Mon		Tue		Wed		Thu		Fri	
		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
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To Regular

/ \ = Present. Grey = Holidays.

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Example impact from one of our Mentees. The comparison is between two different academic years, the attendance summary on the left profiles an academic year without mentoring, the summary on the right, profiles an academic year where mentoring took place.

Attendance Mentoring

Delivery by school, Academy or Multi-Academy Trust

Delivery is in context of school improvement and Continuous Professional Development (CPD) by enhancing existing school roles (e.g. Attendance Officer, Pastoral Care, SEND, Safeguarding).

Support includes:

- coaching/supervision
- support materials (e.g. Practitioners Guide; Attendance Planner; Parent Handbook)
- ongoing service support (e.g. by telephone/video conferencing)

Attendance Mentoring supports delivery of DfE: Working together to improve attendance.

A T T E N D A N C E P L U S

Attendance Plus is a private limited company that provides independent attendance support to maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities. We are specialists in the areas of school attendance, participation and engagement.

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