

Edinburgh Learns: Maximising School Attendance

Implementation date: August 2024

Control schedule

Approved by	Lynne Binnie
Approval date	23/08/24
Senior Responsible Officer	Jennifer Connell
Author	Jennifer Connell
Scheduled for review	August 2027

Version control

Version	Date	Author	Comment
0.1	August 2024	Jennifer Connell	

Committee decisions affecting this policy

Date	Committee	Link to report	Link to minute
23.1.24	Education, Children and Families	Maximising Models of School Attendance	Minute 160424

Edinburgh Learns: Maximising School Attendance

1. Policy statement

Edinburgh Learns: Maximising School Attendance policy outlines the City of Edinburgh Council's ambition and framework to ensure schools promote and achieve high levels of school attendance for *all* children and young people. The approaches outlined focus on collaboration at all levels, the utilisation of resources within and between establishments and strengthening partnerships across the city. *Every Day Counts* and attendance at school is a key driver to raising attainment and achievement. We must all work together to encourage and motivate our children and young people to maximise their attendance at school. This policy should be implemented alongside the associated procedures.

2. Scope

This policy sits within a suite of policies which all promote a positive ethos of inclusion. The purpose of this policy and associated procedures is to provide a clear and consistent framework for all staff to promote attendance and manage school absence. In this policy a multi-agency approach has been adopted that requires the consideration of the holistic wellbeing needs of the child within the GIRFEC framework where services and partners work together in a 'one service approach'.

3. Definitions

Attendance Lead: responsibility for implementing the Inclusion by Maximising Attendance policy and associated procedures. In most schools this will be the Head Teacher however, this may be delegated to a member of the Senior Management Team.

Child / children / young person / young people: this document uses these terms interchangeably to describe any person under the age of 18 years of age.

CME: Children Missing in Education.

GIRFEC: Getting it Right for Every Child, the Scottish national practice model.

Named Person: the designated member of staff for each child or young person who provides them and their families with a point of contact for information, advice or help.

Looked After/ Care Experienced: is an umbrella term which can mean children / young people who are looked after at home, looked after away from home in a residential children's house, in a foster placement or in a kinship placement, previously looked after, where at some point in their lives they have had any of the above experiences. The child/ young person may never have been formally looked after.

Parents: describes any person who has parental responsibilities.

Pupils: describes all children and young people who are enrolled, or seeking to enrol, in the City of Edinburgh Council schools.

Schools: all local authority schools, mainstream and special schools, and all settings providing early learning and childcare on behalf of the City of Edinburgh Council.

Staff: describes all Children Education and Justice Service staff.

4. Policy Content

5. Implementation:

- 5.1 Definition of Attendance
- 5.2 Aims of Implementation
- 5.3 Key Principles
- 5.4 Every Day Counts
- 5.5 Key Roles and Responsibilities
- 5.6 Recording on SEEMIS
- 5.7 Utilising Data
- 5.8 Staged Intervention Model for Attendance
- 5.9 Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Attendance
- 5.10 Parent Engagement and Communication
- 5.11 Patterns of Lateness
- 5.12 Unauthorised Absence
- 5.13 Children and Young People Unable to Attend School Due to Prolonged Ill Health
- 5.14 Absence Request Due to Exceptional Circumstances
- 5.15 Equality and Diverse Communities
- 5.16 Child Protection and Safeguarding
- 5.17 Attendance beyond Statutory School Leaving Age
- 5.18 Children Missing in Education
- 5.19 Persistent Non-attendance
- 5.20 Referral to the Children's Reporter
- 5.21 Attendance in the Early Years Settings

6 Alternatives to School Attendance in Exceptional Circumstances:

- 6.1 Home Education/Flexi Schooling
- 6.2 Part-time Timetables
- 6.3 Alternative Timetables
- 6.4 Hosting arrangements

5. Implementation

5.1 Definition of Attendance

The Scottish Government (2019) has defined attendance as the “participation in a programme of educational activities arranged and agreed by the school”.

This includes, but not limited to:

- attendance at school
- learning out with the school provided by a college or another learning provider while still on the school roll
- educational visits, excursions and residential visits
- debates, sports, musical or drama activities in conjunction with school
- study leave for learners participating in National Qualifications if arranged by the school during the period of examination timetable
- attending external examinations
- receiving education via hospital or outreach teaching services
- interviews and visits relating to further and higher education or careers events
- interviews with prospective employers
- work experience or volunteering.

5.2 Aims of Implementation

Maximising school attendance will:

- ensure that every child/ young person has the entitlement to an education directed towards realising their potential
- help develop a child/ young person’s relationships with their peers generating opportunities to make friends and to be involved in clubs and activities
- help to develop a child/ young person’s relationship with staff who they can trust to support them in reaching their full potential
- build relationships between our children, young people and families, staff within our establishments and partners in our communities
- serve as a protective factor when challenging or stressful circumstances arise for children and their families, the National Guidance for Child Protection Guidance in Scotland (2021) stresses the importance of promoting good attendance at school as a protective measure for children that may be at risk
- promote academic success which can support progression onto positive post school destinations as school attendance is one of the key factors affecting a person’s employability.

5.3 Key Principles

The following key principles promote effective whole school approaches to ensuring good attendance:

- demonstrating a strong attendance ethos
- welcoming schools which prioritise positive and nurturing relationships underpinned by high expectations and core values and that create safe environments for children and young people to develop
- children and young people are fully included and engaged in the life of the school to encourage good attendance
- a rights-based approach which takes account of the UNCRC and encourages children and young people's participation in their learning is also likely to ensure children and young people are included, engaged and involved in their school and community, and therefore more likely to be motivated to attend
- schools have additional supports and strategies in place for children and young people who are more vulnerable to experiencing barriers to maximising their attendance (e.g. those who are Care Experienced, have Additional Support Needs and/or Disability, are living in the lowest SIMD)
- promoting attendance is part of regular conversations with parents, children and young people
- schools have in place clear procedures for monitoring the attendance of all children and young people
- there are robust systems in place to detect absence including effective home-school communication and schools have clear and consistently applied measures for following up on unexplained absence
- staff, parents and children and young people are clear about attendance procedures
- schools work collaboratively with families to understand and respond to barriers to attendance for individual children and young people and intervene early to any emerging patterns of non-attendance
- every member of staff has a legal responsibility to accurately record attendance – attendance is the responsibility of all
- staff understand absence from school is a potential safeguarding risk and understand their role in keeping children/ young people safe
- there is a common understanding that school absence affects attainment, achievement, wellbeing and wider outcomes.

5.4 Every Day Counts

“*Every Day Counts*” has been adopted as a key driver by the City of Edinburgh Council to press the importance of school attendance and to provide clear messaging regarding the impact of school days missed on pupil learning due to absences.

Every day at school counts for children and young people and it is important to look beyond attendance percentage levels in isolation and consider what the missed days and hours really mean in terms of missed opportunities for learning and personal development.

All schools and staff should revisit this key message regularly and provide clear communication to pupils and parents regarding the importance of school attendance.

5.5 Key Roles and Responsibilities

Children and Young People:

- have the right to be provided with an education and this should enable them to develop their personalities, talents, and abilities
- are listened to and have their voices meaningfully included in decisions that affect them now and in the future in line with the principles of UNCRC
- attendance at school by children and young people is essential in order that they receive the education to which they are entitled
- school attendance supports children and young people to fulfil their potential and become valuable citizens, contributing to society, and achieving their ambitions and life goals.

Parents:

- are responsible for a child’s education
- are responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their children whilst they are not in school
- should be made aware that it is in the best interests of their child’s safety and wellbeing to make sure that the school has their up-to-date contact details and to provide the school with emergency contacts
- must inform the school if the child is absent and reason for this
- should respond promptly to communication from the school regarding attendance
- should work in partnership with the school to promote and support positive relationships to maximise their child’s attendance.

School Staff:

- will record absence according to the associated procedures
- have a role in promoting attendance, supporting interventions to address barriers to attendance and helping to reduce absence from school
- must promote school attendance through the provision of appropriate, engaging and inclusive learning experiences
- will take into consideration the individual circumstances for each child, young person and family and seek appropriate support and interventions
- work in partnership with the child/ young person, parent and where appropriate partners to promote and support positive relationships to maximise attendance, using the GIRFEC framework.

School Management Teams:

- will have due regard to the welfare, wellbeing and health and safety of children and young people and will be in a position to account for the presence of their pupils at all times
- will provide parents with regular information regarding the importance of attendance and a record of their child's attendance
- will foster a culture where attendance is promoted with all stakeholders
- will support the Attendance Lead to implement the Maximising Attendance policy and procedures
- will have clear protocols and procedures in place to ensure accurate recording and management of attendance using SEEMIS.

Attendance Lead:

- will be responsible for overseeing and promoting the implementation of the Maximising Attendance policy and procedures
- will coordinate the implementation and quality assurance of approaches to attendance
- will ensure processes are in place to ensure accurate attendance records for all pupils
- will review attendance data fortnightly to identify trends
- will work collaboratively through the GIRFEC framework to maximising attendance for all pupils and prevent patterns of non-attendance from developing
- will work with children, young people and families to understand and address barriers to attendance
- will ensure appropriate supports and interventions are implemented
- will lead and support staff that have a role in managing pupil attendance.

The Named Person:

- will respond quickly to absence to ensure children and young people are safe and well
- will follow up on individual pupil absence to enable appropriate responses
- will support reintegration into learning on returning from absence
- will be aware of early signs or concerns which may cause absence, and use the GIRFEC framework to assess, identify barriers and evaluate interventions
- will develop positive and trusting relationships with pupils and parents to prevent difficulties arising and to ensure barriers to maximising attendance are discussed and resolved when they do take place.

The Education Wellbeing Service:

- will employ 4 core functions to support schools and families to maximise attendance: consultation and advice, assessment and intervention, data for improvement, professional learning
- will develop local solutions with partners to support children and young people to maximise their school attendance
- will discuss attendance data with schools to establish support and early intervention that promotes attendance and facilitates policy implementation
- will support transitions between key stages signposting and providing advice on appropriate referrals to partner services, and linking schools to the support that is available
- will co-deliver professional learning for school staff and families that promotes school attendance
- will employ evidence-based interventions to support the wellbeing of children, young people and families
- will become involved in delivering targeted interventions to a small number of children, young people and families
- will support the implementation of this policy and associated procedures.

5.6 Recording on SEEMIS

A pupil attendance register for every pupil must be stored on SEEMIS. All staff in schools involved in attendance monitoring should have SEEMIS access and must register pupils appropriately.

Please refer to the associated procedures for guidance regarding appropriate SEEMIS coding.

5.7 Utilising Data

Attendance data should be used to:

- monitor the attendance of all pupils as well as placing a specific focus on groups of the most vulnerable children and young people (e.g. those who are Care Experienced, have Additional Support Needs and/or Disability, are living in the lowest SIMD).
- target interventions required for specific individuals and groups of children and young people
- set and monitor annual attendance targets
- continually review performance in relation to attendance.

Attendance data should be reviewed as a minimum fortnightly to identify trends and to ensure appropriate supports can be implemented at the earliest stage when patterns of attendance show a decline which may indicate potential barriers to attending.

5.8 Staged Intervention Model for Attendance

Schools must develop a positive culture for attendance, thresholds can then be used as a trigger for initiating early intervention and support when further intervention to address barriers is required. The GIRFEC framework should be used to support attendance and engagement when early interventions have not been impactful.

To effectively promote and maximise school attendance schools must have in place a staged assessment model whereby universal measures are in place for all children and young people with targeted and intensive interventions being available when there are concerns about a child or young person's school attendance.

- **Universal** measures should be in place to promote high levels of school attendance for all children and young people in line with '*Every Day Counts*'
- **Targeted** supports should be in place to help to address patterns of non-attendance emerging, schools must act quickly to support children, young people and their families
- **Intensive** supports should be in place for children and young people where there are barriers to maximising attendance and or patterns of non-attendance to ensure interventions are timely, managed and impactful

Universal measures should be in place in all schools to promote high levels of school attendance for all children and young people. These include ensuring schools establish a culture and ethos which promotes attendance which is shared with pupils, parents, and partners in the learning community to build strong relationships to support collaboration between all stakeholders e.g. promotion of '*Every Day Counts*'. Communication is a key principle of fostering partnerships. Information about every child/ young person's attendance should be shared with their parents at least once per term.

Targeted measures should be put in place when attendance falls below 90% more rigorous data analysis should be conducted to understand the patterns of absence. Communication with parents to discuss any possible barriers to attendance, agree and log interventions. This should be proportionate and based on the school's knowledge of the child/ young person's circumstances. For example, if a child/ young person was absent due to a family holiday which led to their attendance falling below 90% and where their attendance is usually not a concern, there would be no requirement for an intervention. The child/ young person's attendance should be monitored fortnightly while their attendance remains below 90%. If a child/ young person's attendance continues to decline, further supports should be investigated, agreed, implemented and interventions logged.

Intensive measures should be put in place for all children and young people whose attendance continues to decline, attendance should be reviewed at least fortnightly and interventions evaluated. Intensive support should be in place for children and young people who are experiencing significant barriers to attendance. Each individual case should be considered in the context of a child centred approach with the aim of working together with families. When evaluation of intensive supports does not result in positive outcomes for the child/ young person or an improvement in their attendance or engagement, the GIRFEC framework should bring together the team around the child/ young person to work together to take forward next steps.

5.9 Identifying and Addressing Barriers to Attendance

Children and young people may be absent from school for a number of reasons. It is important to understand the individual circumstances of children/ young people who are not managing to attend school and use the GIRFEC framework to ensure that barriers to learning and attendance are identified, and appropriate support provided.

Barriers to maximising school attendance can be grouped under four categories as outlined below. It is important to note that for some children and young people they may experience several barriers across categories which makes attending school very challenging.

Individual	Peer	Family	School
Self-esteem, social skills, social confidence	Conflict with, or fear of another child or young person	Parent mental health	Social and emotional needs and concerns relating to mental health and anxiety about school
Struggling with learning or specific lessons	Social isolation	Being a young carer	
A learning need or ASN	Bullying and/or perceived bullying	Migrant and immigrant status	Difficult relationship with teacher or perceived support from teacher
ACEs	Lack of belonging or connectiveness	Financial factors	Curriculum and Teaching and Learning
Social emotional and behavioural needs	Issues relating to social media	Family challenges	Classroom management
Health		Low belief in value of education	Transition difficulties

5.10 Parental Engagement and Communication

Communication with parents is essential in promoting the positive benefits of regular attendance as well as supporting at an early point any difficulties in attending school. It should be clear to parents and children or young people that any strategies or supports will be respectful and considerate towards any family circumstances e.g. English as an Additional Language. In discussing attendance with parents, it is important to recognise the challenges that can be part of family life, such as balancing work commitments; or dealing with financial challenges that may occur. Schools and settings need to be aware of barriers that parents face in accessing and processing information. In particular, they may find it hard to discuss their own poor mental and physical health circumstances that are impacting upon their child's attendance at school.

5.11 Patterns of Lateness

Benefits of punctuality in the context of school attendance should be communicated with pupils and parents as part of the school developing a positive culture of promoting attendance. Late coming can be an early indicator of future declining attendance or a barrier to attending therefore should be tracked as part of universal attendance monitoring.

A record should be kept of late arrivals and early departures and these situations should be dealt with through the school's normal procedures for managing attendance. In circumstances where a pattern of lateness is emerging each case should be looked at on its own merit however further intervention is likely to be required as an early intervention to support attendance:

- explain the concerns and procedure in relation to patterns of lateness and agree a way forward with the pupil and their parent(s)
- using the GIRFEC framework to establish the reasons for persistent lateness and plan for supports.

5.12 Unauthorised Absence

Schools should record an absence as an unauthorised absence where no satisfactory reason for missing school has been provided. Unauthorised absence can include:

- family holidays during term time – these should be recorded as unauthorised unless in exceptional circumstances
- absence with parental awareness in specific circumstances - this may be because a parent believes their child will benefit from participation in an alternative activity
- occasional absence without parental awareness
- longer term absence due to perceived school related issue or wider wellbeing issues
- absence relating to pupil substance/alcohol misuse
- non-attendance during the examination period when pupil does not have an external exam.

5.13 Children and Young People Unable to Attend School Due to Prolonged Ill Health

For some children and young people, their learning is interrupted due to prolonged ill health. This can be for a single block of time or for a number of episodes. During this time schools should maintain contact with children/young people and parents and make arrangements to support access to appropriate learning opportunities. These arrangements may include the provision of curricular work, remote teaching or outreach teaching as agreed appropriate through the GIRFEC plan.

The main emphasis in the initial period of absence for the child/ young person will be on recovery. However, where possible, absence should not lead to a reduction of education provision which would have a detrimental effect on the child/young person's progress.

A child/ young person absent from school through ill health may receive treatment in a variety of settings. In some cases, this may mean that the child/ young person travels to a hospital which is located beyond the local authority area in which they live or in which they are educated. Education may be provided in any of these settings and the responsibility for doing so remains with the child/ young person's school.

Within the GIRFEC framework, the Named Person has a key role for maintaining communication with parents and carers and the child/ young person. It is paramount that they identify what kind of work the child/ young person can manage, in what format the work needs to be presented and what kind of contact the child/ young person needs with school – both in terms of academic support and social support from peers. They will also work with appropriate professionals to help facilitate the child/ young person's return to school, which may take place on a phased basis over a period of time, and what supports will be required once they are back in school.

5.14 Absence Request Due to Exceptional Circumstances

Applications for absence due to exceptional circumstances refer to a parent requesting exemption from school attendance for a child. Requests must be made in advance of the period of absence. Each case should be reviewed in consultation with the Head Teacher and school Attendance Lead. Information on making such requests should be accessible on the school's webpage with paper copies available from the school office. The Absence Request Due to Exceptional Circumstances form must be filled in by the parent and submitted to the Head Teacher. The school can authorise requests for a maximum of 10 school days beyond this authorisation must be provided by Education Wellbeing Service Team Leader.

5.15 Equality and Diverse Communities

Schools should recognise and work to mitigate the particular challenges faced by specific groups of children and young people and the risks that these pose to their attendance at school. Full consideration must be given to promoting equality and preventing discrimination with regard to children's needs arising from their gender, ethnicity, religion, culture, sexual orientation, health, abilities and disabilities. When identifying and addressing barriers to attendance, schools should also be aware of the challenges faced by specific groups of children and young people with protected characteristics that may make them more vulnerable to experiencing barriers to maximising their attendance.

5.16 Child Protection and Safeguarding

Consistent and vigilant school-based processes are essential for safeguarding all children and young people. Follow-up action by alerting the parent must be taken following any identification of a pupil not in school without their parent's knowledge.

Child Protection procedures should be taken forward as required.

If the child/ young person has an allocated Social Worker, they should always be alerted to any unexplained absence.

Social Work must be notified immediately by telephone of the absence of any child who is on the City of Edinburgh's Child Protection Register.

If a child or young person is looked after at home or away from home a monthly update of attendance should be shared with the named Social Worker.

5.17 Attendance beyond Statutory School Leaving Age

There is no statutory requirement for young people to continue their education at school once they reach the age of 16 years. Young people, who choose to stay on at school beyond school leaving age, and their parents, should be strongly encouraged to consider their continued commitment to maximising their school attendance. Attendance should be monitored and reviewed regularly in line with the Staged Intervention Model and where appropriate through engagement in the GIRFEC framework. Attendance must also be monitored to ensure proper entitlement to the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Their curriculum should support them to work toward their next step beyond school.

5.18 Children Missing in Education

Children missing from education are children and young people of compulsory school age who are: on a school roll but are not attending and there has been **no contact** with the child/ young person or their family; not on a school roll and are not being educated elsewhere (e.g. home educated, privately educated or in an alternative provision).

The Children Missing from Education procedure (CME), in line with the principles of GIRFEC, aims for the City of Edinburgh Council to work in partnership with colleagues from other agencies to prevent children and young people becoming missing from education. Action must be taken at school to locate children and families who appear to be missing and to try to re-engage them with appropriate services. If these enquiries are unsuccessful in locating the child despite vigorous checks by the school, a referral should be made to CME.

In all cases the first and most important factor to consider is safety. Should there be any concern that the child may be at risk, it is essential that Child Protection procedures are followed.

If the child has an allocated Social Worker, they should always be alerted to any unexplained absence.

When a child/ young person leaves their school to enrol at another Scottish local authority school, an independent school, or a school out with Scotland, contact should be made with the new school to arrange a handover the child/ young person's information.

A child can become missing in education where there is:

- no details of enrolment at a new school
- no forwarding address or information
- information suspected or proved to be false
- a sudden move
- no contact with the family
- a child removed at the end of term with no forwarding information
- a move to an independent school
- a child and family that move into temporary accommodation
- a child is enrolled at a school but does not present
- a family apply for a space at a City of Edinburgh school but withdraw before attending without confirmation of an onward school place being secured
- a family makes an absence request due to exceptional circumstances e.g. heritage holiday, and do not return on the date they were due to.

If a child/ young person has not returned from an authorised absence request (due to exceptional circumstances) or where the maximum of 12 weeks absence has been exceeded, the Education Wellbeing Service should be consulted, and a wellbeing concern form completed.

Schools have a responsibility to investigate unexplained absences. The Education Wellbeing Service can support where efforts by the school have proved unsuccessful and their support is therefore deemed necessary with these enquiries.

Action required includes:

- contacting those named in emergency contact details held in the school
- contacting additional emergency contacts held by school
- enquiries with known friends or family
- a home visit
- enquiries with neighbours
- confirming with other schools in the local authority that the child has not transferred
- enquiries with social work, where appropriate
- contacting the housing department to confirm if the family have left / been evicted / been re-housed
- contacting the police through the community police officer or by calling 101.

5.19 Persistent Non-attendance

Promoting and maximising school attendance is the City of Edinburgh Council's focus. When a child/ young person's attendance declines and there is no improvement in attendance despite early interventions, the school should use the GIRFEC framework assessment principles and practice to aim to address barriers to attendance. This is so that regular focus is given to the child or young person to support them to maximise their attendance ensuring that structured interventions are implemented with time given to affect change.

Measures for compulsion can be used when multi-agency efforts through the GIRFEC framework to improve attendance have been exhausted. When regular non-attendance at school becomes an issue and additional factors are present, Social Work may intervene. This will be at the minimum level required without recourse to statutory powers. Formal avenues to secure attendance, including prosecution, will only be utilised when appropriate and proportionate to do so. Social Work is a statutory service that support families to reduce significant harm. Social Work will assess the risk of 'harm'. In the main, non-attendance at school is not often regarded as harm in the absence of other risk factors.

If there is a wellbeing concern regarding the safety of a child/ young person, the school should contact Social Work through Social Care Direct. The information given will be assessed and a decision made if risks meet the threshold for statutory measures.

5.20 Referral to the Children's Reporter

Before deciding to refer to the Children's Reporter (SCRA) a complete and thorough assessment engaging with the child/ young person, parent and partners through the GIRFEC planning framework will have taken place to ensure all support options and interventions have been exhausted. **No single agency referrals should be made to the Children's Reporter.** A referral will only be made to after there has been full discussion with other agencies including Social Work and if it is assessed that the child/ young person is at risk. This will be a multi-agency joint referral which considers that the child/ young person is in need of a compulsory measure of supervision. This would mean that the child/ young person would attend a children's hearing and may be placed on supervision requirement, which could include a condition of attendance at a named school.

Non-attendance at school without reasonable excuse is not a standalone ground for referral to the Children's Reporter.

5.21 Attendance in the Early Years Settings

Regular and consistent attendance in the Early Years Settings contributes positively to early learning progress. It builds routines, the value of education and impacts positively on a smooth transition to primary school. It also supports schools in developing positive links with Health Visitors for the most vulnerable children.

Although attendance at Early Years Settings is not statutory, it is recommended that all Early Years Settings have policies and practices focussed on promoting and maximising attendance. “*Every Day Counts*” should be communicated as part of the transition to primary school programme.

If there are concerns about a child’s safety and wellbeing, Child Protection procedures must be followed. If a child stops attending their early years setting on a regular basis without explanation or prior notification, nursery headteacher/ managers have a responsibility to investigate the reason for the child’s non-attendance.

6. Alternatives to School Attendance in Exceptional Circumstances

The City of Edinburgh’s aim for including all children and young people in education is that they are present, participating, achieving and supported in full time education. It is only in exceptional circumstances that alternatives to full time attendance at school should be considered.

6.1 Home Education / Flexi Schooling

An application to seek permission to home educate must be made to the City of Edinburgh Council. The same application must be submitted if the parent is requesting to home educate part-time known as flexi-schooling. Planning to support flexi-schooling arrangements and the educational goals while the child or young person attends school should be carried out using the GIRFEC framework. The child/ young person should attend a minimum of 3 days at school.

6.2. Part-time Timetables

In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to implement a package of support that can only be achieved using a part-time timetable. A part-time timetable must be time limited with the intention of being a planned strategy which has as its principal purpose the successful, steady and incremental re-integration and inclusion of the child/ young person into full-time education.

A part-time timetable must be reviewed over a period of 6 weeks and would ordinarily follow an exclusion or a period of non-attendance as a result of illness or Emotionally Based School Avoidance.

During the period of a part-time timetable the named person is the key point of contact for the family. The school must provide work and appropriate guidance for the time the child/ young person is not in school in line with the UNCRC rights of the child and the statutory duty to provide education for all pupils. Activities and tasks should closely relate to the work the child will be missing in class and therefore support their continued learning and reintegration. Clear guidance should be given regarding completion of the work and returning this to school including who to contact with any questions.

Professionals must be assured that the pupil is not at greater risk when on a part-time timetable. There must be evidence that there has been a full consideration of risks prior to implementation and ensure decisions are based on informed assessment using the GIRFEC framework.

Part-time timetables must:

- take into account the views of the child, young person and parent
- have the recorded approval of the parent and young person (*within their capacity*)
- be based on a shared assessment of wellbeing that it is in a child's best interests and likely to be beneficial in meeting the individual child's needs
- be documented within the GIRFEC planning framework with clear aims, expectations and duration
- inform pupils and parents what support they can expect from school and who to contact for advice
- comply with the statutory responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils.
- be recorded accurately.

The following individual considerations must be taken into account:

- **Additional Support Needs and/or Disability:** consideration must be given to the possibility that the circumstances leading to the implementation of a part-time timetable may arise from a pupil's additional support needs and/or disability. Particular care must be taken to ensure that the part-time timetable does not breach the child's rights under the Equality Act 2010. Any part-time timetable must ensure necessary adjustments to ensure the ongoing provision of supports that are in place to meet identified additional support needs are continued to be provided (e.g. access to therapeutic interventions such as Speech and Language Therapy/Physiotherapy/School Counselling).
- **Care Experienced Children:** the decision to put in place a part-time timetable must consider the impact on the pupil's engagement with education, their care placement and consequently life chances; the protection of key relationships and maintenance of good routines and continuity should be prioritised. Care Experienced children and young people often experience issues at home or in their community, which may significantly impact on their educational progress and engagement. A part-time timetable should only be implemented where a shared assessment identifies it likely to successfully meet the underlying needs of the child/ young person and improve outcomes. In all circumstances consultation must take place with the named Social Worker to assess risks and vulnerabilities *before* any change is implemented.
- **Child Protection:** particular care and consideration must be given to placing a child/ young person on a part-time timetable when they are on the Child Protection register. In all circumstances consultation must take place with the

named Social Worker to assess risks and vulnerabilities *before* any change is implemented.

6.3 Alternative Timetable

An alternative timetable is a medium to long term timetable which is significantly different to that accessed by the majority of pupils. This may often involve a significant proportion of time engaging in planned educational activities which are not based in mainstream classes or a school building.

Alternative timetables are useful to consider in circumstances where engagement and motivation are significant obstacles to progression and alternative pathways based on the child/ young person's interests and targeted skill development, will build on a pupil's strengths; they are often linked to plans for post school destinations.

Alternative timetables should be designed and agreed through GIRFEC planning with the young person / family and should always aim to be as close to full time as is possible.

6.4 Hosting Arrangements

A hosting arrangement is a planned strategy which can be considered in exceptional circumstances for children and young people who are finding it difficult to maintain a placement in their current school.

The rationale for hosting should be based on:

- maintaining pupils in full time education
- minimising any loss of learning opportunities
- providing a 'fresh start' to pupils where this is felt to be appropriate.

A hosting formally transfers a pupil who is experiencing difficulties in their own to school to a placement in an alternative City of Edinburgh school on a temporary basis (with a view to enrolment in the hosting school). This arrangement should take place over a time limited period and if considered successful the pupil should be enrolled at the host school permanently without delay. During the period of hosting the child/ young person remains on their base school's roll.

A hosting should only be considered in exceptional circumstances a part of a wider package of support and should consider:

- the evidence that a wide range of strategies have been tried for a sustained period prior to considering a hosting and that the Team Around the Child is in agreement that a new school environment may lead to improvements in attendance, wellbeing, safety, relationships, and attainment/ achievement

- the child/ young person and parent's views; their motivation and engagement will be a key factor in success
- practical considerations e.g. how the child/ young person will be supported to travel to the host school
- a realistic opportunity of the child/ young person returning to their base school if the hosting is either successful or unsuccessful
- a hosting as a positive strategy to support children and young people.

Successful hosting arrangements are dependent on all those involved having key information about the pupil and being very clear on the roles and responsibilities of the base school and of the host school. Hosting arrangements are not short-term punitive placements. Hosting arrangements should be planned with an expectation of a permanent move.

A hosting is *not* appropriate:

- if the child/ young person has moved to the host school's catchment area
- as a condition of consideration of re-admission to the base school after exclusion
- when there has been a recent failed hosting
- as a strategy to address parenting difficulties and/ or the child's behaviour out-with the school context.

Please refer to the Inclusion by Maximising Attendance Procedure for further advice and guidance to exceptions to attendance at school.

7. Roles and Responsibilities

The Head of Education (Inclusion): Responsibility for the maintenance of this policy and associated procedures

The City of Edinburgh Council: Gathering and analysing school attendance statistics to monitor trends across the local authority and to support schools to resource interventions to maximise attendance.

8. Related Documents

[Getting it Right for Every Child \(GIRFEC\)](#)

In this policy a multi-agency approach has been adopted and requires considering the holistic needs of the child within the GIRFEC framework where services and partners work together with a 'one service approach'

[GIRFEC policy](#)

[Included Engaged Involved Part 1 - A Positive Approach to the Promotion and Management of Attendance in Scottish Schools](#)

"Four key features of inclusion ensuring all children are: present, participating, achieving and supported." [Included Engaged and Involved in Edinburgh](#)

Attendance is one of the 5 key drivers of the Scottish Attainment Challenge

[Scottish attainment challenge](#)

[Children and Young People \(Scotland\) Act 2014](#)

[Schools General \(Scotland\) Regulations 1975 All schools are required to keep an attendance register for every pupil](#)

[Education \(Scotland\) Act 1980 section 30](#)

[Curriculum for excellence](#)

[The Promise](#)

[Child Protection Scotland 2021 updated 2023](#)

[Edinburgh and the Lothians Multi Agency Child Protection Procedures](#)

[The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child \(UNCRC\)](#)

[Improving Outcomes for Learners as Risk of Exclusion](#)

[Children missing from education-scotland-guidance-for-local-authorities](#)

[Keeping children safe in education 2023](#)

[Scottish Children's Reporter Administration Edinburgh](#)

[Children unable to attend school due to ill health](#)

9. Equalities and Impact Assessment

Integrated Impact Assessment - June 2024

10. Review

The policy will be reviewed by August 2027