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**To: Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee**

**From: The Schools Attendance Task and Finish Group of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)**

**Date: 9 April 2026**

**Subject: Recommendations from School Attendance Task and Finish Group**

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## **1 Purpose of the Note**

- 1.1 To inform Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee of the recommendations arising from the School Attendance task and finish group (T&F) of the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2).

## **2 Recommendations**

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee recommend:

- 1) The Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
  - a. support officers to interrogate the available data to identify groups disproportionately affected by or at risk of severe persistent absence in order to identify appropriate early interventions to support those pupils and families.
  - b. Focus services on early intervention and transition points, maximising the opportunities and resources provided through the proposals in the 'Every Child Achieving and Thriving' white paper and other strategies such as the Belonging Approach and Best Start in Life
- 2) That the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) receive a further report in 12 months' time to monitor progress on attendance data and update on the above recommendations.

## **3 Information and Background**

- 3.1 At their meeting on 27 November 2025, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) agreed to establish a task and finish group to look in more depth at the issues affecting school attendance. The Board requested that Scrutiny Co-ordination Committee consider the recommendations to enable additional time for scrutiny to take place.
- 3.2 The task and finish group met twice to look in more detail at what the available data was saying about school attendance, as well as support offered to schools to encourage attendance.

## **4 Meeting 1**

- 4.1 Members discussed the latest attendance data for Coventry schools, highlighting improvements in overall attendance, persistent and severe absence rates, and comparisons with national and regional figures. Including:
- Attendance Rate Improvements
  - Persistent and Severe Absence
  - Comparative Analysis
  - Cohort-Specific Trends
  - Ethnicity and Disproportionality
- 4.2 Members also discussed the analysis of absence reasons and coding including:
- Authorised and Unauthorised Absence Breakdown
  - Use of Absence Codes
  - Reduced Timetables and Exclusions
  - Data Recording and Parental Engagement
- 4.3 Officers also outlined the structure and operations of the local authority attendance team, statutory and traded offers, and the processes for supporting schools and families. Including:
- Attendance Team Structure
  - Statutory and Traded Offers
  - Early Help and Legal Intervention
  - Best Practice Sharing and Equity of Support
- 4.4 Also discussed was the process of the extended non-attendance at school panel (ESNAP), its procedures, and its role in supporting schools and students with prolonged absence and potential outcomes and recommendations of the panel

## **5 Meeting 2**

- 5.1 This meeting was to follow up the actions identified at Meeting 1, including:
- Autumn Term Absence Analysis
  - Severe Absence Cohort Investigation
  - School Case Study Collection
  - Coding Reasons for Absence Review
- 5.2 The T&F also heard evidence from the Head at All Saint's Primary school covering:
- Relationship-Building with Families
  - Direct Support and Flexibility
  - Managing Unauthorised Absence and Honesty
  - Use of Fines and Cultural Considerations
  - Supporting Children with Complex Needs
- 5.3 Other issues discussed at the meeting were transitions to secondary schools and the challenge of maintaining relationships with families.
- Transition Challenges: Participants noted that transitions from primary to secondary can disrupt established relationships, with secondary schools often lacking the informal parental engagement seen in primary, which can impact attendance and support for vulnerable students.

- Belonging Strategy Development: Plans to co-produce a belonging approach with local authority officers and headteachers, aiming to embed relational practices across all settings and ensure that policies and protocols are viewed through the lens of belonging.
- Consistency in Relational Practice: The need for all staff, including supply teachers, to consistently apply relational approaches
- Parental Engagement in Secondary: The lack of routine positive communication between secondary schools and parents, suggesting that more proactive engagement could help address entrenched absence issues and support transitions.

5.4 Early intervention was also identified as a key factor in supporting good attendance including:

- Early Years Focus: The importance of more resources to be directed towards early years education to enable early identification and support for children at risk of persistent absence
- White Paper and Policy Alignment: The implications of the education white paper, including proposals for funding changes and the integration of various government initiatives, with a focus on ensuring that resources are used effectively and consistently across the system.
- Pilot Models and Family Support: Plans for pilot models, such as the family valued approach which aims to provide earlier and more holistic support to families, with the intention of preventing escalation to severe absence.
- Role of Family Support Workers: The value of family support workers, attached to schools, who could help build trust and address barriers to attendance more effectively.

5.5 The task and finish group also requested that more analysis of the data was undertaken and that a further report be prepared for next municipal year.

## Appendix 1: Scoping Document

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