


Expanding the role of school attendance mentors

21 October 2024  Laura Murphy

A quick update as part of our series on attendance and on the government's plans regarding the expansion of the school attendance mentor programme in priority education investment areas. This initiative, which has shown promising results in its pilot phase, is set to play a pivotal role in addressing absenteeism and enhancing student engagement across schools.

The school attendance mentor programme initially launched as a pilot and is designed to tackle the complex issue of student absenteeism by providing targeted support and mentorship to students facing challenges in maintaining regular attendance.

The government's decision to expand this programme to 10 further areas (but stopping in the pilot areas) is a testament to its effectiveness in improving attendance rates and overall student well-being.

Under the expanded programme, school attendance mentors will continue to work closely with students, parents, and educators to identify the root causes of absenteeism. These professionals are trained to offer compassionate support and practical solutions, helping students overcome barriers to regular attendance.

A holistic approach

Their approach is holistic, focusing on the students' overall wellbeing and engagement with their education. 50 mentors will be recruited to support up to 3,600 pupils per year (around 10,800 pupils in total) over the three years of the expanded programme.

For the education sector, the expansion of the programme presents both opportunities and considerations. Schools may need to navigate new guidelines and potentially integrate attendance mentors into their existing support and intervention systems. This integration will require careful planning and coordination to ensure that the program's benefits are maximised for the students most in need.

The importance of collaboration

Moreover, the expansion of this programme underscores the importance of a collaborative approach to addressing absenteeism. Schools, supported by external agencies and education professionals, will play a crucial role in implementing the program effectively. This may involve revising attendance policies, enhancing communication with parents, and ensuring that staff are trained to work alongside attendance mentors.

The government's plans to expand the school attendance mentor programme marks a significant step forward in the fight against absenteeism. As this initiative moves beyond its pilot phase, we encourage our clients to consider the implications for their institutions and to explore how they can actively support and benefit from the programme.

Further support

As always, we're here to answer any questions you may have about the school attendance mentor programme, attendance and absence matters.

We've published a series of articles, hosted a webinar and prepared training and other support for schools since the DfE released their updated guidance '[Working together to improve school attendance](#)' outlining the changes to attendance and registration requirements.

For your ease of reference you can access all of this information here:

- [Understanding the changes to attendance requirements](#)
- [Implementing the new attendance monitoring requirements](#)
- [The latest penalties for school non-attendance](#)
- [School attendance and absence management training](#)
- [School attendance - getting to grips with the new regulations \[free on-demand webinar\]](#)
- [Attendance management checklist for schools](#)

All of our articles are published [on our website](#) and you can keep up to date with all of the support and advice we publish by [signing-up for email updates](#) or following us on [LinkedIn](#) or [Twitter](#).

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