



Whitegate Primary and Nursery School **Attendance Strategy 2026-2027**

'Every Day Matters'

Achieving Excellence, Fostering Belonging and Creating Equity Through Attendance

At Whitegate Primary and Nursery School, we believe that every day matters. Regular attendance is essential if children are to achieve academically, develop positive relationships, access enrichment opportunities and feel a strong sense of belonging within our school community.

Over recent years, Whitegate has strengthened attendance systems and procedures through robust monitoring, early intervention, attendance meetings, partnership working with families and the consistent application of statutory attendance expectations. This work has resulted in improving attendance outcomes. However, attendance remains below national averages and persistent absence continues to have a significant impact on a proportion of pupils.

The next phase of our attendance journey focuses on building a culture where attendance is everyone's responsibility. While strong systems remain important, sustainable improvement will come from ensuring pupils feel they belong, families understand the importance of attendance, barriers are identified early, and attendance becomes a regular part of school conversations.

Our ambition is simple:

Every child attends every day unless they are genuinely too unwell to do so.

Our Attendance Vision

Attendance is fundamental to our vision for every child.

Achieve Excellence

Children cannot benefit fully from high-quality teaching, intervention, enrichment and support if they are not in school. Strong attendance improves learning, progress and achievement.

Foster Belonging

Children who attend regularly develop stronger relationships, greater confidence, improved wellbeing and a deeper sense of belonging within the Whitegate community.

Create Equity

Children who miss school miss opportunities. Improving attendance helps ensure that all children, regardless of their background or circumstances, can access the same experiences, support and life chances.

Attendance is therefore not simply a measure of presence. It is a measure of opportunity, engagement and inclusion.

Context

Despite current systems and processes are having a positive impact on some targeted families:

- Attendance remains below national averages.
- Persistent absence remains a significant challenge.
- A substantial proportion of pupils attend between 90% and 95%, placing them at risk of becoming persistently absent.
- Attendance patterns continue to impact attainment, wellbeing and equity.

As a result, our strategy focuses on both supporting those with significant attendance concerns and preventing pupils from becoming persistently absent.

Knowing Our Pupils

At Whitegate, we recognise that attendance is influenced by a wide range of factors and that no single intervention will improve attendance for every child.

Using principles from the EEF Supporting School Attendance Reflection and Planning Tool, we will ensure attendance discussions focus not only on who is absent, but why.

Understanding Attendance Barriers

Attendance concerns may be linked to:

- Physical health needs
- Mental health and emotional wellbeing
- Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
- Family circumstances
- Housing or transport challenges
- Friendship difficulties
- Adverse childhood experiences
- Behaviour concerns
- School-based anxiety
- Safeguarding concerns
- Parental experiences and attitudes towards school attendance

We recognise that attendance is often the symptom of a wider issue rather than the issue itself.

Understanding Attendance Through Multiple Sources

Attendance information will be reviewed alongside:

- Safeguarding information
- SEND information
- Behaviour records
- Academic progress
- Pupil voice
- Parent voice
- Vulnerability indicators

This helps ensure that support is personalised and proportionate.

Relationships Matter

Strong relationships remain central to improving attendance.

Every child should feel:

- Known
- Valued
- Safe
- Included
- Missed when absent

Strong attendance is built through strong relationships.

Our Approach

Not every attendance issue requires the same response.

- Some families require support.
- Some require challenge.
- Many require both.

Our commitment is to understand barriers, work alongside families and intervene at the earliest possible stage.

Strategic Priorities

Priority 1: Attendance is Everybody's Responsibility

Attendance is not solely the responsibility of the Attendance Officer.

Improving attendance requires collective ownership across the school community.

We will:

- Discuss attendance regularly within staff briefings.
- Share attendance information with teachers.
- Include attendance within pupil progress discussions.
- Ensure attendance is considered within safeguarding and pastoral reviews.
- Report attendance trends to governors and trustees.
- Develop staff understanding of attendance expectations and barriers.

Success will look like:

- Staff understanding their role in improving attendance.
- Attendance becoming a regular part of professional conversations.
- Increased shared ownership across the school.

Priority 2: Preventing Persistent Absence

Reducing persistent absence remains a key priority. However, our strategy places equal emphasis on preventing children from becoming persistently absent.

Our Golden Group

Children attending between 90% and 95% represent a key target group.

These pupils are often at risk of becoming persistently absent and therefore require early intervention.

We will:

- Identify pupils below 95% attendance on a half-termly basis.
- Review all pupils within the Golden Group.
- Engage parents early.
- Identify barriers before attendance deteriorates further.
- Provide support and guidance where appropriate.

Success will look like:

- Fewer pupils moving into persistent absence.
- Reduced numbers within the Golden Group.
- Earlier intervention leading to improved attendance.

Priority 3: Early Help, Support and Challenge

Attendance concerns will be addressed through a balanced approach of support and challenge.

We will:

- Hold attendance meetings with families.
- Develop attendance improvement plans where appropriate.
- Utilise Early Help processes.
- Involve safeguarding teams when required.
- Work with external agencies.
- Continue to apply statutory attendance expectations consistently.
- Use legal intervention where support has not secured improvement.

Success will look like:

- Reduced persistent absence.
- Reduced severe absence.
- Improved attendance among identified pupils.

Priority 4: Attendance Through Belonging

Children are more likely to attend school when they feel connected, successful and valued.

Attendance improvement will therefore be supported through The Whitegate Way.

We will:

- Foster positive relationships.
- Promote inclusion.
- Strengthen behaviour and belonging systems.
- Develop pupil voice.
- Ensure pupils are recognised and celebrated.
- Continue to expand enrichment opportunities.

Through our enrichment offer pupils will access experiences such as:

- Educational visits
- Outdoor learning opportunities

- Theatre visits
- Cinema experiences
- Sports and wellbeing events
- Yoga and mindfulness activities
- Special theme days
- Wider curriculum opportunities

We want every child to believe:

"I belong at Whitegate and I do not want to miss out."

Priority 5: Communication, Recognition and Attendance Culture

Attendance will become a visible and regularly discussed aspect of school life.

We will:

- Include attendance information within newsletters.
- Discuss attendance in assemblies.
- Share attendance expectations regularly with parents.
- Report attendance using days missed as well as percentages.
- Continue weekly communication regarding lateness.
- Promote clear attendance messages across school communications.

Our Key Message

Miss School, Miss Out

We want every family to understand the impact of missed learning, missed experiences and missed opportunities.

Priority 6: Celebration and Recognition

Attendance is an expectation, but positive recognition can help reinforce strong attendance habits.

Weekly

- Class Attendance Award
- Minimum attendance threshold of 95% to qualify

Half-Termly

- Attendance certificates
- Recognition of improved attendance

Seasonal Initiatives

- Attendance Advent
- Daily attendance prize draws

Throughout the Year

- Surprise Golden Ticket attendance days
- On-time attendance recognition

Our approach focuses on celebrating:

- Improvement
- Commitment
- Positive habits
- Consistency

rather than perfect attendance alone.

Implementation Plan

Action	Lead	Autumn	Spring	Summer
Launch Attendance Strategy	Head of School	✓		
Staff awareness and attendance briefing	Head of School	✓	✓	✓
Golden Group identification and review	Attendance Officer	✓	✓	✓
Attendance discussed within pupil progress meetings	SLT / Teachers	✓	✓	✓
Attendance included in newsletters	SLT	✓	✓	✓
Attendance assemblies	SLT	✓	✓	✓
Attendance Advent initiative	Attendance Team	✓		
Golden Ticket attendance days	Attendance Team		✓	✓
Attendance reviewed alongside safeguarding information	DSL / Attendance Team	✓	✓	✓
Attendance reports to governors and trustees	Head of School	✓	✓	✓
Attendance strategy evaluation	Head of School			✓

Monitoring and Evaluation

Weekly Monitoring

Led by the Attendance Officer.

This includes:

- First day response procedures
- Attendance monitoring
- Lateness monitoring
- Identification of emerging concerns
- Information sharing with SLT at weekly safeguarding and attendance meetings

Evidence

- Arbor reports
- Attendance tracker
- Absence records
- Safeguarding records where appropriate

Half-Termly Attendance Review

Led by:

- Head of School
- Attendance Officer
- DSL
- SENDCo (where appropriate)

Review will include:

- Whole-school attendance
- Persistent absence
- Severe absence
- Vulnerable groups
- Golden Group attendance
- Impact of interventions

Evidence

- Attendance dashboards
- Group analysis
- Attendance meeting records
- Intervention logs

Termly Strategic Review

Led by SLT.

Review will include:

- Progress against attendance targets
- Impact of strategic actions

- Year group trends
- Effectiveness of rewards and communication
- Attendance of vulnerable groups

A summary report will be presented to governors and trustees.

Annual Evaluation

At the end of each academic year, school leaders will complete a full evaluation of the strategy, including:

- Progress against targets
- Attendance trends
- Persistent absence trends
- Impact of interventions
- Areas for future development

Findings will inform the following year's attendance priorities.

Success Measures and Milestones

Autumn Term 2026

Strategic Focus

Awareness, belonging and early intervention.

Success Measures

- Attendance Strategy launched.
- Attendance discussed regularly with staff.
- Golden Group identified and reviewed.
- Attendance Advent launched.
- Attendance included in newsletters and assemblies.
- All pupils below 95% reviewed.

Attendance Aspiration

- Attendance maintained above 93%.
- Fewer pupils moving into persistent absence than in the previous year.

Spring Term 2027

Strategic Focus

Intervention and engagement.

Success Measures

- Attendance integrated into pupil progress discussions.
- Golden Ticket initiative launched.
- Increased attendance conversations with families.
- Earlier interventions implemented consistently.
- Reduced number of pupils within the Golden Group.

Attendance Aspiration

- Persistent absence reduced from Autumn baseline.
- Improved attendance across identified groups.

Summer Term 2027

Strategic Focus

Embedding culture.

Success Measures

- Attendance embedded within The Whitegate Way.
- Strong staff ownership.
- Attendance consistently considered alongside safeguarding, behaviour and progress.
- Positive attendance culture evident across the school.

Attendance Aspiration

- Whole-school attendance exceeds 95% (94% in 25/26)
- Persistent absence reduced below 10% (16.7% in 25/26, 12% in 24/25)

Longer-Term Attendance Journey

2026-27: Build Culture

Embed attendance as everyone's responsibility and establish a culture of attendance through belonging, communication and early intervention.

2027-28: Embed Habits

Strengthen attendance habits, reduce persistent absence further and move closer to national attendance averages.

2028-29: Sustain Excellence

Achieve and sustain attendance above national averages, with attendance fully embedded as part of The Whitegate Way and the school's wider improvement strategy.

Conclusion

Improving attendance is one of the most effective ways we can improve outcomes for children.

At Whitegate, attendance is not viewed purely as a compliance issue. It is a key driver of excellence, belonging and equity.

By combining strong systems, early intervention, meaningful relationships and a culture where every day matters, we will ensure that more children attend regularly, achieve highly and fully participate in the life of our school.

Every day matters. Every child matters. Every minute counts.