# Appendix 1 - Case Study: Improving Attendance for Pupils at Risk of Persistent Absence

This case study explores a pilot initiative targeting pupils with **85–95% attendance** a group close to becoming persistently absent (below 90%). Evidence shows that timely, supportive communication with parents can help improve attendance and prevent further decline.

### Pilot

From January to March 2025, Camden Council piloted a parental messaging intervention in three primary schools (Rhyl Community, Fleet, and Primrose Hill), with further testing underway at Haverstock secondary. The approach centred on sending empathetic, personalised text messages to parents of pupils at risk of persistent absence. Messages were informed by interviews with staff and families, focusing on barriers that prevent parents from seeking help and exploring how schools can engage more effectively.

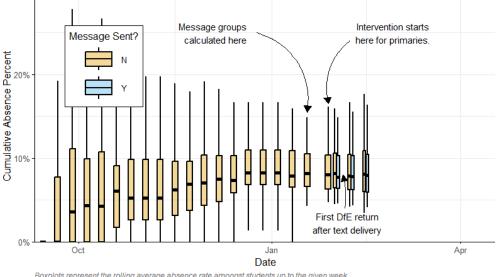
#### Approach

- 1. Personalised Messaging use the child's name and reflect family context.
- 2. Empathetic Tone recognise barriers like health, housing, or cultural factors.
- Relatable Framing visualise impact of absence (e.g., "days missed = books not read").
- 4. Trust-building present the school as a partner, not an enforcer.

#### Outcomes

- Pupils whose parents received messages had a 1% higher attendance over three weeks.
- The biggest gains were seen in the first week, suggesting strong impact when timed around dips.
- Attendance gains were isolated to those receiving messages, not part of a wider trend.

Cumulative absence rates amongst Students in the text message pilot
Data is drawn from the DfE View Your Education tool. It includes compulsory aged state school students.
Students in intervention school with attendance between 85-95% were eligible for a text. The control
group includes students from statistically identified schools with attendance at the same rate (85-95%) at
the start of the intervention.
Message groups
Intervention starts



Boxplots represent the rolling average absence rate amongst students up to the given week. The horiztonal bar represents the median absence rate. The box captures that 25th to 75th percentile. Whiskers represent the range of minimum and maximum values. Variation (whiskers) is constricted as of 18-01-2025 due to the restriction to students at 85-95% attendance.

## Conclusion

This low-cost, scalable intervention shows early signs of success in improving attendance. Personalised and empathetic messaging can reconnect schools and families—helping to address issues before they lead to persistent absence.