

LONDON BOROUGH OF CAMDEN	WARDS: All
REPORT TITLE Persistent Absence and Elective Home Education	
REPORT OF Senior Adviser: Safeguarding & Inclusion, Camden Learning	
FOR SUBMISSION TO Children, Schools and Families Scrutiny Committee	DATE 10 November 2025

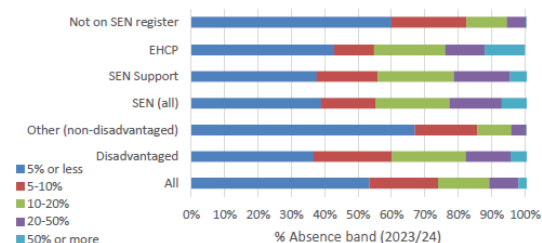
10.4 A copy of a school's attendance booklet (Extract)

Absence overview

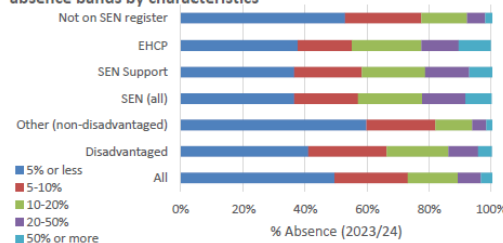
D) Absence bands

		2023-24 (annual)					2024-25 (aut spr)				
		5% or less	5-10%	10-20%	20-50%	50% or more	5% or less	5-10%	10-20%	20-50%	50% or more
All pupils	School	53%	24%	14%	8.2%	1.1%	53%	21%	15%	8.7%	3.3%
	Camden Sec	46%	28%	16%	7.6%	2.5%	49%	24%	16%	7.5%	3.6%
Disadvantaged	School	35%	28%	20%	14.8%	2.4%	37%	23%	22%	13.5%	6.0%
	Camden Sec	39%	28%	20%	10.3%	2.5%	41%	25%	20%	9.7%	4.5%
Other (non-disadvantaged)	School	66%	22%	9%	3.0%	0.0%	67%	19%	10%	4.4%	0.8%
	Camden Sec	55%	28%	13%	4.0%	1.1%	60%	22%	12%	4.5%	2.0%
SEN (all)	School	41%	22%	19%	15.1%	2.8%	39%	16%	22%	15.6%	8.0%
	Camden Sec	34%	24%	20%	14.4%	6.6%	36%	21%	21%	14.0%	8.5%
SEN Support	School	38%	22%	20%	17.8%	2.4%	38%	18%	23%	16.8%	5.9%
	Camden Sec	33%	26%	22%	14.4%	5.4%	36%	22%	20%	14.2%	7.4%
EHCP	School	47%	25%	16%	9.6%	2.7%	43%	12%	21%	11.9%	11.9%
	Camden Sec	40%	25%	17%	13.7%	4.0%	38%	18%	22%	12.0%	10.5%
Not on SEN register	School	57%	25%	12%	5.7%	0.4%	60%	23%	12%	5.6%	1.3%
	Camden Sec	49%	28%	15%	5.9%	1.4%	53%	25%	15%	5.8%	2.3%

2024/25 School - absence bands by key characteristics



2024/25 Camden Secondary - absence bands by characteristics



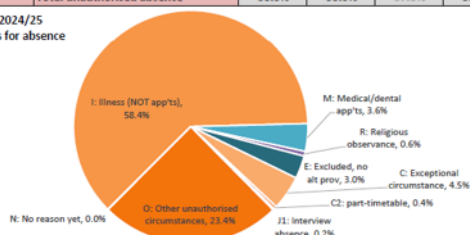
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Absence overview

E) Reasons for absence - as a % of absent sessions

		Annual data									Difference	
		2022/23			2023/24			2024/25 (autumn / spring)			2024/25 to 2022/23	2024/25 to 2023/24
		School	Camden Secondary	National Secondary	School	Camden Secondary	National Secondary	School	Camden Secondary	National Secondary		
Authorised absence	I: Illness (NOT app'ts)	60.1%	49.4%	45.7%	57.5%	48.3%	43.6%	58.4%	46.6%		-1.8%	0.9%
	M: Medical/dental app'ts	3.2%	4.9%	3.9%	3.1%	5.7%	4.0%	3.6%	5.2%		0.4%	0.5%
	R: Religious observance	1.6%	4.3%	1.1%	0.2%	1.0%	0.6%	0.6%	2.8%		-1.0%	0.4%
	S: Study leave	0.0%	1.6%	1.2%	0.0%	2.4%	1.3%	0.0%	0.1%		0.0%	0.0%
	H: Agreed family holiday	0.1%	0.3%	0.3%	0.5%	0.4%	0.3%	0.0%	0.1%			
	E: Excluded, no alt prov	2.0%	1.9%	3.0%	2.5%	2.2%	3.5%	3.0%	2.2%		1.0%	0.5%
	Other authorised circumstances	2.7%	7.1%	7.2%	3.2%	7.5%	7.6%					
	C: Exceptional circumstance							4.5%	6.9%			
	C1: performance absence							0.3%	0.1%			
	C2: part-timeable							0.4%	2.0%			
Unauthorised absence	J1: Interview absence							0.2%	0.2%			
	Total authorised absence	69.7%	69.5%	62.5%	66.8%	67.7%	61.0%	70.9%	66.0%		1.2%	4.1%
	G: Family holiday not agreed	2.0%	2.6%	4.1%	2.8%	2.4%	4.3%	1.6%	2.2%		-0.4%	-1.2%
	U: Arrived late	1.4%	1.0%	2.1%	2.0%	2.4%	2.5%	4.1%	5.4%		2.7%	2.0%
	O: Other unauthorised circumstances	24.0%	21.4%	30.2%	28.1%	22.9%	31.4%	23.4%	24.4%		-0.6%	-4.7%
	N: No reason yet	2.9%	5.5%	1.1%	0.2%	4.5%	0.8%	0.0%	2.0%		-2.9%	-0.2%
Total unauthorised absence		30.3%	30.5%	37.5%	33.2%	32.3%	39.0%	29.1%	34.0%		-1.2%	-4.1%

School 2024/25 reasons for absence



Notes

This analysis looks at the percentage of absent sessions due to each absence reason. This is calculated by 'number of sessions absent by reason' expressed as a percentage of the 'total number of sessions absent for all reasons'.

'Traveller absence' has been excluded from this chart due to small % overall.

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Appendix B Examples of Intervention &

Analysis by key groups

L 2) Analysis of ethnic groups by absence rate

		2022/23 annual				2023/24 - annual				2024/25 - autumn / spring			
		School		Camden	National	School		Camden	National	School		Camden	National
		Cohort size	% absence			Cohort size	% absence			Cohort size	% absence		
			School	Secondary	Secondary		School	Secondary	Secondary		School	Secondary	Secondary
All pupils		943	8.1%	8.9%	9.0%	937	7.7%	8.5%	8.9%	927	8.6%	8.9%	8.9%
Year Group	Year 7	193	6.6%	7.2%	7.0%	2	1.4%	13.3%	6.8%	187	8.3%	6.6%	6.8%
	Year 8	189	7.8%	8.5%	8.5%	3	10.7%	22.0%	8.5%	185	7.6%	8.5%	8.5%
	Year 9	178	8.8%	9.6%	9.6%	4	16.7%	19.0%	9.5%	188	8.0%	8.8%	9.5%
	Year 10	194	9.7%	10.0%	10.1%	1	13.4%	21.1%	10.0%	185	9.4%	10.3%	10.0%
	Year 11	182	7.9%	9.3%	10.6%	1	21.9%	25.9%	10.4%	180	9.9%	10.1%	10.4%
Ethnicity	Bangladeshi	40	7.6%	10.1%	7.7%	42	7.0%	8.9%	6.9%	34	7.2%	9.8%	6.9%
	Asian Other	6	3.5%	8.5%		10	8.1%	7.3%		12	6.1%	6.5%	
	Black African	61	8.1%	7.2%	5.0%	57	5.9%	6.3%	4.4%	61	5.8%	6.5%	4.4%
	Congolese	3	5.4%	5.8%		3	3.5%	5.6%		3	5.5%	4.6%	
	Somali	36	9.7%	8.6%		30	7.3%	7.7%		36	5.9%	7.9%	
	Black Caribbean	24	9.2%	10.2%	8.8%	23	11.1%	8.6%	4.4%	17	10.5%	10.0%	4.4%
	Black Other	13	14.0%	10.0%	6.7%	8	15.7%	7.1%	6.3%	7	12.5%	6.7%	6.3%
	White British	460	8.7%	9.2%	9.6%	450	7.6%	9.6%	9.8%	431	8.6%	10.0%	9.8%
	White Other	117	6.4%	8.3%	8.2%	114	6.4%	7.9%	7.9%	118	7.9%	8.1%	7.9%
	Albanian / Kosovan	5	11.2%	8.3%		5	5.0%	7.1%		4	8.6%	7.3%	
	Mixed (all)	158	8.3%	9.6%	9.4%	151	8.5%	9.1%	9.2%	171	9.6%	10.7%	9.2%
	Other	11	5.5%	8.7%	7.9%	15	9.6%	8.5%	7.3%	15	13.5%	8.1%	7.3%
	Unknown	53	6.4%	9.3%	10.5%	57	8.0%	8.6%	10.3%	61	9.8%	8.9%	10.3%
	Ethnicity and disadvantage	White British: Disadvantaged	145	14.5%	14.8%		139	13.3%	14.9%		141	14.9%	15.5%
White British: Other (not dis)		315	6.0%	6.0%		307	4.9%	6.4%		290	5.6%	6.6%	
White Other: Disadvantaged		33	10.2%	10.9%		34	10.3%	10.5%		41	10.7%	10.5%	
White Other: Other (not dis)		82	5.0%	6.6%		80	4.8%	6.1%		77	6.4%	6.4%	
Bangladeshi: Disadvantaged		27	7.7%	10.9%		31	7.4%	9.3%		27	7.4%	10.4%	
Bangladeshi: Other (not dis)		12	6.9%	8.8%		10	5.9%	8.0%		7	6.5%	8.6%	

10.5 Monthly Attendance Leads e-newsletter (Extract)

Attendance Update

October 2023

Attendance data

October 26 DfE data (unvalidated)

DfE national data is available to the 12 September 2023

Primary Y10

- Camden: 95.5%
- National Primary: 95.2%

Secondary Y10

- Camden: 91.6%
- National Secondary: 94.33%

Special Y10

- Camden: 85.4%
- National Special: 82.67%

Attendance data is available to view in the Attendance Strategy and Resource Section 001.

Spotlight on ...

Code U - unauthorised absences for lateness

DfE (VVED) data for the year to date shows Camden schools recorded the second highest percentage rate of absence as Code U unauthorised lateness in England and the highest in London. These are pupils who have been more than thirty minutes late.

In Primary schools the highest is Westminster 0.34% (190 sessions) compared to Camden's 0.15% (118 sessions) and the lowest was Richmond at 0.04% (52 sessions) we ranked 28/32 in London and 140/151 across England for Code U.

In Secondary only Bristol had a higher rate of lateness 0.42% (923 sessions), Camden has 0.41% (253 sessions) Tower Hamlets has the lowest at 0.02% (40 sessions), Camden was the highest in London and ranked 32/32 and 150/151 for lateness.

Harlow recorded the smallest number of late session 25 (0.08% of their overall absence) and Birmingham had the highest at 1658 sessions (0.21% of overall absence)

Our Attendance 101 session on the 13 October will include a section on the new Ofsted framework at about 3pm. Sign up if you would like to come along. You can join for that section via teams.

Event Information

Attendance 101

For new attendance leads / attendance staff who want to get an overview of legislation relation to attendance, children missing education, legal procedures and effective home education. Please RSVP to attend. Free - Hybrid meeting both in person and online.

When?

Things to do in October

Checklist for actions

UOL

- Update list of children with social workers share with Attendance Lead and Attendance team (have there been changes since the start of the school year)
- Review attendance of children with social workers each week
- Discuss with social workers where attendance issues are developing

Attendance Lead

- Half term is rapidly approaching some parents may take leave before and after have you reminded them when school is finishing / returning.
- Read new Ofsted toolkit for Attendance judgements. How does your data / practice link to new guidance?
- Review PA / SA pupils for September and identify what support they might need is absence will an issue this year. Do plans need to be updated?
- Review and sign off PAs for submission to LA for start of school year.
- Review your attendance data by ethnicity, are there differences?
- Are frequently late pupil / parents reminded about your breakfast club?
- Is lateness more common in certain years or classes?
- Are clocks accurate in classrooms?

Attendance officer / LWO

- Update user generated groups for quick monitoring of pupils with social workers
- Update priority first day call list remove any leavers
- Collate evidence for PPA referrals to the LA for the start of term
- Read new Ofsted toolkit to understand Attendance judgements
- Prepare data / report for Attendance Lead absence by ethnicity and by gender
- Prepare data / report for Attendance lead on lateness, Codes L and U who do you see the most?
- Have someone spoken with pupils and parents who have concerning attendance / lateness, do letters need to be issued as reminders?

Articles and reports

Testing parents' number of missed school days can help improve attendance, study shows

Takeweezy: Tests had a larger impact on parents than once highlighting a child's attendance in percentage terms. Greatest impact was observed among:

- Pupils eligible for free school meals
- Girls
- Year 8 students

Parents who received the tests were more likely to take action, such as:

- Discussing attendance with their child
- Monitoring it more closely

BITUP: Updating Parents on Number of School Days Missed - trial | EEF

Why attendance rewards don't work

Takeweezy:

- Attendance incentives like pizza parties or prizes may not improve attendance and can even have negative effects, according to recent research.
- Belonging and connection may be more effective than external rewards in improving attendance.
- Schools should cultivate environments where students feel valued and want to attend.

Parents working from home affecting school attendance, says councillor - BBC News

Takeweezy:

Impact of Remote Work on Parental Attitudes

- Some parents working from home are questioning why their children can't do the same.

Graduated Response Model for Attendance — brought to you by the Attendance Magazine team.

Takeweezy:

- Use data to target resources effectively
- Build culture of belonging
- Supporting vulnerable pupils

Resources

DfE Attendance and Behaviour Hub

Opportunity to access support from Attendance and Behaviour Hubs.

Support pathways

Lead schools will deliver two support pathways:

- Enhanced support:** This pathway is for schools which want and need more concerted support for attendance and behaviour. Eligible partner schools will receive 10 days of support over 2 terms from their allocated lead schools. This support will be based around helping the partner school understand its attendance/behaviour strengths and areas for development, as well as developing and implementing an improvement plan.
- Regional support:** Eligible partner schools will have access to a structured attendance and behaviour CPD offer, opportunities to visit the allocated lead school as part of a series of family open day events, and opportunities to discuss and share effective practice with other schools in the Hub. Each lead school will facilitate a network of 30-40 partner schools as part of this pathway.

The EOI attached below allows you to:

- Express an interest in being supported by the programme as a whole
- Sign-up to join one of the Autumn term open days and have more about the support that will be available.

At the moment, hubs are focused on support for mainstream primary and secondary schools, although they plan to extend the programme to encompass AP and special schools in due course.

Expression of interest form

Contacts and Forms

Please see links to the forms [GONU Code absences and illness absences for Years 1 - 10](#)

[IEYS welfare rights service is here](#)

10.6 Examples of shared best practice (extracts from forthcoming Camden Learning Attendance Practice Guidance)

Case Study: Netley Primary School

Title: *Empathetic Communication that Builds Trust*

Collaborative, family-focused strategies have been key to tackling persistent attendance challenges at Netley Primary School. Recognising that penalty notices alone were ineffective for vulnerable families, the school introduced an 'Attendance Awareness Course'—a supportive alternative to fines that was inspired by speed awareness courses. Parents at risk of a fixed penalty notices attend four sessions exploring routines, the impact of absence on future outcomes, and engaging activities that build empathy for their children's experience. This approach has led to a 75% success rate, with improved attendance sustained into the following academic year. Alongside this, home visits and creative use of access codes have helped verify absence reasons and foster honest conversations. The Family Support Worker plays a vital role, offering practical advice and nurturing support, such as guidance on addressing housing issues. These tailored, relational interventions have built trust, improved attendance, and created more open dialogue with families who were previously hard to reach.

Regent High School

Title: *Strengthening Family Engagement Through Multi-Agency Communication*

Regent High School's work with the Brandon Centre's Return to Learn (R2L) programme highlights the of strong multi-agency partnerships in improving attendance. Developed and delivered by the Brandon Centre, R2L was introduced into the school to support students struggling with attendance due to anxiety, disrupted routines, or wider family challenges. The programme combines structured parental mentoring with achievable goals and consistent encouragement to rebuild routines and re-engage pupils with school life. Regent High School supported implementation by identifying at-risk students through attendance data and hosting attendance surgeries led by the Student Inclusion Support Officer. Family Link workers played a vital role in enabling parental engagement, offering practical support and adapting sessions to meet families' needs. Coffee mornings further strengthened relationships. Attendance data showed measurable improvements, and parents valued the inclusive, supportive approach. This case demonstrates how external expertise, embedded within school systems, can drive improvements in attendance.

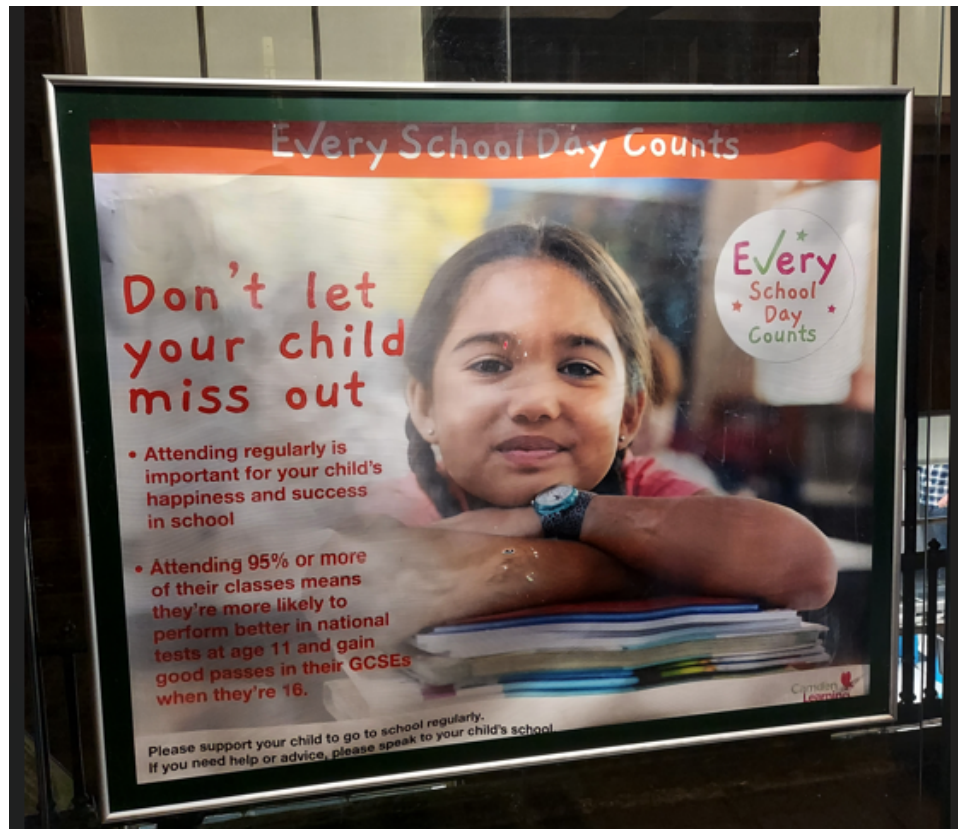
Case Study: Edith Neville Primary School**Title:** *Understanding Individual Needs to Unlock Attendance*

Strong partnership with families, tailored support, and consistent communication are key to improving attendance at Edith Neville Primary School. One pupil with 69% attendance, who was affected by anxiety and frequent illness, was supported through a holistic, family-centred approach. The school's Family Liaison Officer built trust with the child's parent, encouraging open dialogue and helping understanding of the impact of absence. The school created a bespoke support plan for the child with specialist input and maintained daily contact with the family. The Wellbeing Worker offered safe spaces and practical strategies for both pupil and parent. Targeted interventions—such as messy food play and supported lunch sessions—were introduced to build confidence. With support from the SENDCo and Teaching Assistants, the pupil's wellbeing and engagement improved, and their attendance reached 95%. The pupil now enjoys school and eats with peers, while her parent/carer feels reassured and supported.

Case Study: Christ Church Primary School**Title:** *Creating Belonging to Sustain Engagement*

At Christ Church Primary School in Hampstead, high attendance is driven by a strong culture of belonging and community. Pupils and families feel part of something bigger, which encourages regular attendance and deep engagement. Every child is known, seen, and valued from day one—staff greet pupils daily, learn every name, and build meaningful relationships, especially with those who may find school more challenging. Activities like 'week in the spotlight' and pupil presentations help staff understand each child's background and strengths. Whole-school events—daily assemblies, singing, performances, and inclusive campaigns—foster unity and ensure no one is left out. These practices are underpinned by their Rights Respecting Schools work, which reinforces every child's right to be included and educated. Pupils and families feel their contributions matter, and they don't want to miss out. This sense of connection and shared purpose sustains excellent attendance and strengthens the school community.

10.13 Copy of the bus stop campaign poster



10.14 Links to videos

[School Attendance Animation Film 2024](#)

[Lost in the Game | The Toll on School Attendance](#)

10.17 Extracts from the initial trial of the EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) toolkit

EBSA Sharing Perspectives Tool (SPT)

Rationale:

- Offer a **way** to understand the **child, parent** and **school perspectives**
- Use **simple, closed questions** that focus on understanding each perspective (no aim to diagnose, label, blame)
- Offer a **tool** that enables sharing, reflection and solution focused conversations

3. Has there been a sudden change in your child's attendance at school? *

- ☐ My child's attendance has stayed the same
- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No, it's been gradual
- ☐ This has always been a difficulty

4. Do you know your child's attendance rate as a percentage? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

27. When was the last time the child completed a **learning assessment/test** in class, for any subject? *

- ☐ Last week
- ☐ Last 2 weeks
- ☐ Last month
- ☐ Last half-term
- ☐ Last term
- ☐ Last year

28. Does the child complete **home learning/homework**? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

9. Do you know what your **last school report** shows about your academic progress? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No

10. Are you **making progress** in the subjects that are important to you? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ I don't know

11. Do you **answer questions** in class? *

ABS Student A – Sharing Perspectives Summary

This report is informed by Education Endowment Fund (EEF) research that has found feedback and parental engagement can have positive impact on student progress.

Student Profile: Student A **Date:** 04/07/2025

Year Group	10
Date last attended	7 May
Date child was last seen by school	6 June
Child was last seen	Home visit, in person
Attendance % for current academic year	54.15%
Attendance % for last academic year	88.10%
Attendance highlighted at a key transition point	No
Current attendance % bracket	50-69%
SEND Status	None
Medical Diagnosis	None
Safeguarding Status	No safeguarding concerns
Child at risk of CCE or CSE	No
Elective Home Education at any point	No
Parent carers are concerned about attendance	Yes

Summary:
A previously had good attendance and was making expected progress at school. It is unclear what resulted in a reduction in attendance over the last academic year.
A, parents and school all recognise that A has been independent and can be again.
A has expressed an interest in being a chef.

Question	Student Response	Parent Response	Learning At School School Response	Action/Outcome
Gets ready for school independently		No		
Travel to school independently	Yes	Used to		Potential to travel independently again
Knows last school report and academic progress.	Yes			Useful to review the last 3 progress reports with A, parents and school to reflect on this information and make a plan?
Academic attainment in core subjects		Below expected	Below expected in core subjects	This disparity needs to be discussed with A and parents to identify priorities to support progress. Would a careers appointment be helpful to link to chef courses. Is it helpful to revisit when A was making academic progress to support motivation and re-engagement?
Do you attend core subjects	No			
Academic attainment in favourite subjects	Yes – making progress		Below expected	
Attend favourite subjects	No			
Decline in academic attainment		Yes	Yes	
Personal device (tablet, laptop)		Yes		

Sharing Perspectives Tool Feedback

Schools (2) use have trialled SPT have said:

- Accessible
- Well designed
- Asks impactful questions e.g. about morning routines
- Useful to discuss with students
- Helpful to understand where there are discrepancies in understanding between the school and parent carers
- Focus on assessment of learning is useful
- A way of understanding how children use their time at home
- Has enabled one school to change how they communicate with a parent and how they share learning progress reports

EPS had the follow questions:

- Who undertakes the questionnaire?
- What level of attendance is required to use this questionnaire?
- What indicators would lead to the use of this questionnaire?
- Do the questions need to be more holistic to understand 'why'?
- Who is it pitched to?
- Do parents complete this alone? What support is there? Who is in the network?
- When to use what tool?

Case Study: Parliament Hill School

Title: *Universal Systems Supporting Complex Needs*

Personalised, multi-agency approaches are essential to supporting students with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) at Parliament Hill School. Recognising that EBSA often stems from neurodiversity, trauma, bullying, or health conditions, the school developed a phased provision for persistently absent students in Years 7–13. The programme involves early identification by pastoral teams, close collaboration with external partners, and tailored interventions. These are delivered in three phases: initial consultation and planning; foundation or complex support (including home visits, virtual learning, and reduced timetables); and student-led reintegration using SMART goals. While progress is not always linear, successful reintegration cases have reached 100% attendance. The provision demonstrates the value of bespoke, relationship-based strategies and highlights the need for schools to expand capacity to meet the group of children's needs effectively.