

**DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

**EQUALITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS POLICY SCREENING**

**FOR**

**CONSULTATION ON REVISED PUPIL ATTENDANCE  
STRATEGY**

**GUIDANCE**

- Please note that this document should always be referred to as an [Equality Screening](#) not an [Equality Impact Assessment](#) (which is a more detailed document requiring a consultation period of at least three months).
- Please use easy to understand language and short sentences. Try to aim for a comprehension level for a P7 pupil.
- Hyperlinks may be added (as can annexes) but avoid tables.
- The screening must explain which Section 75 categories are likely to benefit from (or be impacted by) the policy and how/why this is likely.
- The [screening](#) should show data/statistics specific to the "policy" being screened.
- Monitoring (follow-up action) is an important part of the screening.

Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team  
028 9127 9328  
attendance@education-ni.gov.uk

**Equality Screening:** Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

Further advice can be found in [ECNI - Screening for Public Authorities, Effective Section 75 Equality Assessments: Screening and Equality Assessments \(ECNI, 2017\)](#) and [Section 75: Using Evidence in Policy Making - a signposting guide](#)

Index

[PART ONE - BACKGROUND](#).....2  
[PART TWO – SCREENING QUESTIONS](#).....15  
[- LIKELY IMPACT](#).....19  
[PART THREE - SCREENING DECISION](#).....23  
[PART FOUR- MONITORING](#).....25  
[PART FIVE - DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION](#).....26  
[PART SIX - HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES](#).....27  
[PART SEVEN - RURAL NEEDS](#).....28  
[PART EIGHT - APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION](#).....29

## **PART ONE - BACKGROUND**

1.1 This is a revised strategy which follows on from the original version [launched on 14 December 2016](#) by the then Minister for Education, Peter Weir MLA.

This latest version serves to take into account the challenges faced by pupils, parents and schools in a post-pandemic society and recognizes the considerable increase in the numbers of children and young people who are living with a range of mental health issues which in turn is affecting their attendance levels at school.

1.2 Type of policy

This is a revised strategy – [the original was published in December 2016](#)

1.3

- Are there any Section 75 categories which might be expected to benefit from the intended policy?
- What is the policy trying to achieve? (aim/outcomes)
- How will this be achieved?

This strategy contains information useful to all schools, however, it will be primarily of benefit to those educational settings where pupil attendance levels are of concern to the school leadership. Data shows that there are links between social deprivation and school attendance. The overall absence levels increase in line with the percentage of pupils enrolled who are eligible for free school meals.

The information provided within the strategy seeks to provide school leaders with the fundamental principles underpinning this strategy have not changed and should, over time, provide the impetus needed to build upon existing effective practice in our schools together with our existing policies to strengthen our approach to pupil attendance.

1.4 What factors could contribute to, or detract from the intended aim/outcome of the policy?

Financial – the availability of funding would possibly permit for the messaging within the strategy to be conveyed more effectively via a public advertising campaign. In addition, a lack of adequate funding may result in schools not being able to implement certain strategies aimed at improving attendance levels.

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

Health – the repeat of a pandemic leading to school closures and the switch to online learning would have an impact on effective delivery of this strategy.

### 1.5 Main stakeholders affected:

**Pupils** will be presented with fresh ideas on improving attendance levels. **Parents**, will feel more supported by schools in addressing absenteeism. **Teaching Staff**, will have a greater understanding of how to engage with parents and pupils alike in order to improve pupil attendance. **Boards of Governors** will be made aware of their role in challenging school leaders and thus ensuring that pupil attendance levels are always subject to scrutiny.

### 1.6 Who is responsible for?

- (a) Devising the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project
- (b) Implementing it
- (c) Explain the relationship?

The strategy will be devised by the Department of Education in consultation with colleagues in the Education Authority (EA) and primarily within the Education Welfare Service (EWS) and Educational Psychology Team.

Implementation of the strategy lies with individual schools some of whom have considerably greater attendance related challenges than others. Delivering this effectively will require schools to work closely with their allocated member of EWS staff.

From a pupil attendance perspective, EWS staff serve to provide support to schools in cases where a pupil's attendance is at either 85% or below, or where a significant drop in attendance has been noted.

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

### 1.7 Other policies or objectives with a bearing on this policy

As set out in New Decade New Approach, an Expert Panel on educational underachievement was established in September 2020 to examine and address links between persistent educational underachievement and socio-economic background, including the long-standing issues facing working-class, Protestant boys.

The strategy will contribute to the following Executive and Department's strategies and priorities:

1. PfG Action "As an Executive, we agree that the strength and success of our society depends on the wellbeing of each and every one of us. You deserve to have access to the best possible opportunities, so you can live, work, and enjoy a happy, healthy life, in a safe community where you have the confidence to reach your full potential. That is why we are taking steps to help those who are struggling, especially in areas where inequality hits hardest or where issues like crime, poverty, substance use, suicide prevention, poor mental health and other health challenges are most keenly felt. Through joint working across departments, statutory agencies, and voluntary and community organisations, we will work to keep people safe and allow them to achieve their potential. In addition to crucial policies on childcare, housing, the economy, and education, we will make sure that everyone can participate through the introduction of social inclusion strategies."
2. The Department has [published its new corporate plan that "Every child and young person is happy, learning and succeeding"](#).
3. This is underpinned by five new child-centred strategic priorities. They are:
  - Helping all our children and young people by supporting their well-being and learning;
  - Championing the needs and aspirations of all our children and young people and the positive impact of education
  - Inspiring all our children and young people to make a positive contribution to society;

## **Equality Screening:** Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

- Meeting the learning needs of our children and young people and developing their knowledge and skills, enabling them to fulfil their potential; and
- Delivering an effective, child-first, collaborative and high-quality education system

This strategy aimed at improving pupil attendance levels is strategically aligned with the key corporate goals of the Department of Education.

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

### EVIDENCE

- 1.8 What evidence/information (both qualitative and quantitative) have you gathered to inform this policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project in respect of each of the categories?

#### Religious Belief

There is very little difference between the attendance rates of each religion in Table 2.2. When all school types are considered, Protestant pupils and Catholic pupils have a similar attendance rate at 91.9% and 91.8% respectively.

In primary schools the overall absence rate for Catholic pupils (6.7%) was 0.5 of a percentage point higher than the rate for Protestant pupils (6.2%). This was the largest difference in the overall absence rate for pupils of the two main religions in Northern Ireland.

Table 2.2: Attendance by religion of pupil, 2023/24

Religion		Percentage of total half days			
		Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Primary	Protestant	93.8	6.2	3.6	2.6
Primary	Catholic	93.3	6.7	4.3	2.4
Primary	Other <sup>1</sup>	92.6	7.4	4.2	3.3
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Post Primary	Protestant	89.9	10.1	5.6	4.4
Post Primary	Catholic	90.1	9.9	6.1	3.8
Post Primary	Other <sup>1</sup>	89.4	10.6	6.0	4.7
<b>Post Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Special	Protestant	86.3	13.7	8.9	4.7
Special	Catholic	86.4	13.6	8.9	4.8
Special	Other <sup>1</sup>	85.3	14.7	9.5	5.3
<b>Special</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>
All Schools	Protestant	91.9	8.1	4.6	3.5
All Schools	Catholic	91.8	8.2	5.1	3.0
All Schools	Other <sup>1</sup>	91.2	8.8	5.0	3.8
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>

<sup>1</sup>Other religion includes Other Christian, No religion and non-Christian

## **Political Opinion**

The political opinion of pupils is not known as it is not collected. See above as a proxy for political opinion.

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

### Racial Group

Schools are increasingly becoming more ethnically diverse. Nearly 21,400 pupils in schools in Northern Ireland are recorded as “non-white”, and this represents 6.0% of the school population (Table 6b).

**Table 6b: The number of newcomer pupils by school type, 2019/20 - 2024/25**

School Type	2019/20 Number	2019/20 %	2020/21 Number	2020/21 %	2021/22 Number	2021/22 %	2022/23 Number	2022/23 %	2023/24 Number	2023/24 %	2024/25 Number	2024/25 %
Funded Voluntary and Private Pre-schools	331	4.1	264	3.6	247	3.4	269	3.9	239	3.5	182	2.8
Nursery schools	407	7	446	7.7	443	7.6	468	8.1	476	8.2	475	8.3
Nursery and reception classes in a primary school	796	8.1	808	8.2	789	8.0	801	8	871	8.7	858	8.6
Primary and preparatory school (Year 1 - Year 7)	11,964	6.9	12,080	7.0	12,507	7.3	13,291	7.8	14,236	8.4	14,613	8.7
Secondary (non grammar) schools	3,242	4	3,395	3.9	3,765	4.3	3,916	4.3	4,331	4.8	4,353	4.8
Grammar schools	453	0.7	478	0.7	408	0.6	520	0.8	634	1.0	662	1.0
Special Schools	#	#	193	2.9	197	3.0	#	#	200	2.8	209	2.8
EOTAS Centres	c	c	0	0.0	0	0.0	c	c	0	0.0	0	0.0
<b>GRAND TOTAL</b>	<b>17,391</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>17,664</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>18,356</b>	<b>5.2</b>	<b>19,471</b>	<b>5.5</b>	<b>20,987</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>21,352</b>	<b>6.0</b>

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

Irish Traveller pupils have a markedly higher absence rate than any other ethnic group (Table 2.3). Irish Traveller pupils missed 31.2% of total half days, compared with a rate of 9.8% for pupils from a Minority Ethnic Background and 8.1% for White pupils.

**Table 2.3: Attendance by ethnicity, 2023/24**

Ethnicity		Percentage of total half days			
		Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Primary	White	93.6	6.4	4.0	2.4
Primary	Minority Ethnic Background <sup>1</sup>	90.7	9.3	4.7	4.6
Primary	Irish Traveller	69.2	30.8	10.9	19.9
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Post Primary	White	90.0	10.0	6.0	4.1
Post Primary	Minority Ethnic Background <sup>1</sup>	89.7	10.3	5.3	5.0
Post Primary	Irish Traveller	66.0	34.0	12.7	21.2
<b>Post Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Special	White	86.4	13.6	9.0	4.7
Special	Minority Ethnic Background <sup>1</sup>	83.2	16.8	9.9	7.0
Special	Irish Traveller	73.2	26.8	15.6	11.2
<b>Special</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>
All Schools	White	91.9	8.1	4.9	3.1
All Schools	Minority Ethnic Background <sup>1</sup>	90.2	9.8	5.0	4.8
All Schools	Irish Traveller	68.8	31.2	11.6	19.6
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>

<sup>1</sup> Minority Ethnic Background includes Black African, Black Caribbean, Black Other, Bangladeshi, Chinese/Hong Kong, Indian/Sri Lankan, Korean, Malaysian, Pakistani, Roma, Vietnamese, Mixed, Other

## **Age**

There are 22,042 pupils enrolled in funded pre-schools, 167,523 pupils in primary schools (years 1-7). In total, 156,889 pupils are enrolled in post-primary schools. There are 7,462 pupils enrolled in 40 dedicated special schools. In total, 429 pupils were enrolled in EOTAS centers with just 25 pupils are 'single registered' at EOTAS centers; this means that they no longer have a link to a mainstream school.

Source: [School enrolments – 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin](#)

Absence is reported by schools in half-day sessions and recorded as authorised or unauthorised.

- [The overall attendance rate for primary, post-primary and special schools in the 2023/24](#) academic year was 91.7% of the total half days an increase of 1.3 percentage points from 2021/22.
- During the 2023/24 academic year 8.3% of total half days in primary, post-primary and special schools were missed due to absence. These comprised 5.0% authorized absence and 3.3% unauthorised absence.
- The attendance rate for primary schools in 2023/24 was 93.3% of total half days, an increase of 1.7 percentage points from 2021/22. 4.1% of half days were missed due to authorised absence and 2.6% due to unauthorised absence.
- The attendance rate for post-primary schools in 2023/24 was 89.9% (93.3% Grammar, 87.7% Non-Grammar) of total half days, an increase of 0.9 of a percentage point from 2021/22. 5.9% of half days were missed due to authorized absence and 4.2% due to unauthorised absence.
- In special schools, the attendance rate in 2023/24 was 86.1% of total half days an increase of 1.7 percentage points from 2021/22. This sector continues to have the highest absence rate, 13.9% of total half days comprising of 9.1% missed due to authorised absence and 4.9% due to unauthorised absence.

Source: [Attendance at grant aided primary, post primary and special schools 2023/24](#)

### **Marital Status**

The marital status of pupils is not relevant.

### **Sexual Orientation**

[Growing up LGBT+: The impact of school, home and coronavirus on LGBT+ young people \(Cibyl. 2021\)](#) states, “68% of LGBT+ young people say their mental health has ‘got worse’ since the pandemic, compared to 49% of their non-LGBT+ peers”.

### **Men and Women Generally**

Information drawn from the [2023/24 annual statistical report into pupil attendance](#) shows that male and female pupil attendance levels are all but identical as an ‘All Schools’ statistic with 91.7% and 91.8% attendance respectively.

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

**Table 2.1: Attendance by sex, 2023/24**

Sex		Percentage of total half days			
		Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Primary	Male	93.2	6.8	4.2	2.7
Primary	Female	93.4	6.6	4.0	2.6
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Post Primary	Male	90.2	9.8	5.7	4.1
Post Primary	Female	89.6	10.4	6.2	4.2
<b>Post Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Special	Male	86.7	13.3	8.5	4.8
Special	Female	84.6	15.4	10.3	5.1
<b>Special</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>
All Schools	Male	91.8	8.2	4.9	3.3
All Schools	Female	91.7	8.3	5.0	3.3
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>

### Disability

Attendance data is not available for children who are recorded as having a “disability”, rather the closest data would be that which reflects attendance levels at Special Schools.

There are pupils who attend mainstream schools who will be registered as having a disability but attendance data specific to them is not available.

Data gathered as part of the annual school census exercise in 2024 shows in the [School enrolments – 2024/25 Statistical Bulletin](#) that 19.8% (70,232) pupils in schools were recorded as having special educational needs; and that 8.3% (29,499) had a statement of special educational needs.



## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

School Type	Staged Statemented	Stages		Total SEN	Total enrolment	Percentage Statemented	Percentage Stages 1 and 2	Percentage SEN stages 1 to 3
		1 and 2	Total SEN					
Funded Voluntary and Private Pre- schools	84	496	580	6,388	1.3	7.8	9.1	
Nursery schools	157	780	937	5,720	2.7	13.6	16.4	
Pre-school Specialist Provision in nursery schools	21	0	21	21	100.0	0.0	100.0	
Pre-school Specialist Provision in primary schools	86	0	86	86	100.0	0.0	100.0	
Nursery class in a primary school	192	422	614	9,750	2.0	4.3	6.3	
Reception class in a primary school	5	8	13	184	2.7	4.3	7.1	
Primary schools (Year 1 - Year 7)	10,946	22,874	33,820	166,211	6.6	13.8	20.3	
Preparatory depts in a grammar school (Year 1 - Year 7)	52	150	202	1,312	4.0	11.4	15.4	
<b>Primary and Preparatory Departments (Year 1 - Year 7) - Total</b>	<b>10,998</b>	<b>23,024</b>	<b>34,022</b>	<b>167,523</b>	<b>6.6</b>	<b>13.7</b>	<b>20.3</b>	

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

<b>Primary and Preparatory Departments (Nursery to Year 7) - Total</b>	<b>11,281</b>	<b>23,454</b>	<b>34,735</b>	<b>177,543</b>	<b>6.4</b>	<b>13.2</b>	<b>19.6</b>
Secondary (non grammar) schools	8,683	12,850	21,533	90,321	9.6	14.2	23.8
Grammar Schools	1,807	3,138	4,945	66,568	2.7	4.7	7.4
<b>Post primary schools - Total</b>	<b>10,490</b>	<b>15,988</b>	<b>26,478</b>	<b>156,889</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>10.2</b>	<b>16.9</b>
Special Schools	7,455	7	7,462	7,462	99.9	0.1	100.0
Educated off site but not at school (EOTAS)	11	8	19	25	44.0	32.0	76.0
<b>All Nursery, Primary, Post-Primary, and Special</b>	<b>29,404</b>	<b>40,229</b>	<b>69,633</b>	<b>347,635</b>	<b>8.5</b>	<b>11.6</b>	<b>20.0</b>
<b>All Nursery, Primary, Post-Primary, Special and Pre-school</b>	<b>29,488</b>	<b>40,725</b>	<b>70,213</b>	<b>354,023</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>
<b>All Nursery, Primary, Post-Primary, Special, Pre-school and EOTAS</b>	<b>29,499</b>	<b>40,733</b>	<b>70,232</b>	<b>354,048</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>11.5</b>	<b>19.8</b>

## Dependants

In 2023/24, Children Looked After in post primary schools have an attendance rate of 84.1% compared with those who were not in care (90.0%). The largest difference in absence rates between Children Looked After and those that are not in care was for unauthorised absence in post primary schools, 9.0% and 4.1% respectively (Table 2.4)

**Table 2.4: Attendance of Children Looked After, 2023/24**

Children Looked After		Percentage of total half days			
		Attended	Overall absence	Authorised absence	Unauthorised absence
Primary	Children Looked After	93.2	6.8	4.1	2.7
Primary	Non CLA	93.3	6.7	4.1	2.6
<b>Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>93.3</b>	<b>6.7</b>	<b>4.1</b>	<b>2.6</b>
Post Primary	Children Looked After	84.1	15.9	6.9	9.0
Post Primary	Non CLA	90.0	10.0	5.9	4.1
<b>Post Primary</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>89.9</b>	<b>10.1</b>	<b>5.9</b>	<b>4.2</b>
Special	Children Looked After	87.0	13.0	7.5	5.5
Special	Non CLA	86.0	14.0	9.1	4.9
<b>Special</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>86.1</b>	<b>13.9</b>	<b>9.1</b>	<b>4.9</b>
All Schools	Children Looked After	89.1	10.9	5.5	5.4
All Schools	Non CLA	91.8	8.2	4.9	3.3
<b>All Schools</b>	<b>Total</b>	<b>91.7</b>	<b>8.3</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>

Source: [Attendance at grant aided primary, post primary and special schools 2023/24](#)

### **Children in Need**

- At 31 March 2024, 22,450 children in Northern Ireland were known to Social Services as a child in need;

### **Child Protection Register**

- At 31 March 2024, 2,334 children were listed on the Child Protection Register;
- Neglect and physical abuse were the main reasons for a child being on the Child Protection Register and accounted for 81% of all on the Register;
- A total of 1,414 child protection referrals were received by HSC Trusts #1;
- There were 2,258 new registrations to the Child Protection Register and 2,065 de-registrations during the year.

### **Children in care**

- At 31 March 2024, 3,999 children and young people were in care in Northern Ireland. This was the highest number recorded since the introduction of the Children (Northern Ireland) Order 1995;
- Just over a quarter (28%) of looked after children at 31 March 2024 had come into care within the last year and a similar proportion (29%) had been in care for five years or longer.
- Some five of six children in care were in foster care placements (84%), 6% placed with parents, 6% in residential care and 5% in other placements. This was similar to previous years;
- During 2023/24 there were 1,096 admissions to care and 866 discharges.

### **Children's residential homes**

- At 30 June 2024, there were 55 Children's Residential Homes in Northern Ireland, 46 homes were statutory and 9 were independent.
- Statutory homes provided 268 places at an average of six places per home; independent homes provided 27 places at an average of three per home.

### **Children's day care**

- At 31 March 2024 there were 3,261 individuals/facilities registered as day care provision for children aged 12 and under in Northern Ireland. This was a 4% decrease on the previous year;
- Similar to the previous year, childminders made up the largest number of day care providers followed by playgroups;
- At 31 March 2024 there were 55,645 registered places for day care in Northern Ireland representing a decrease of 3% on the previous year.

### **Foster Carers**

- At 31 March 2024, there were 2,639 HSC Trust recruited foster carers and a further 254 Independent sector foster carers;
- During 2023/24, 840 initial home visits were carried out by HSC Trusts and 451 fostering assessments were completed;
- During 2023/24, some 398 foster carers recruited by the HSC Trusts de-registered as carers.

### **Young people subject to Leaving Care Act**

- At 31 March 2024 there were 1,850 young people subject to the Leaving Care Act;
- Some 50% had both a named social worker and a personal adviser #2;
- Of those who had left care, a quarter (29%) were living in a GEM arrangement whilst 18% were living independently.

**Equality Screening:** Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

**PART TWO – SCREENING QUESTIONS - LIKELY IMPACT**

What is the likely impact of this policy on equality of opportunity for each of the Section 75 equality categories?

Religious Belief                      Minor

Political Opinion                      Minor

Racial Group                      Minor

Age                      Minor

Marital Status                      Minor

Sexual Orientation                      Minor

Men and Women Generally                      Minor

Disability                      Minor

Dependants                      Minor

**OPPORTUNITIES TO BETTER PROMOTE EQUALITY OF OPPORTUNITY**

2.2 Are there opportunities to better promote equality of opportunity for people within the Section 75 equality categories?

Religious Belief No

Political Opinion No

Racial Group No

Age No

Marital Status No

Sexual Orientation No

Men and Women Generally No

Disability No

Dependants No



## **MULTIPLE IDENTITIES**

2.5 Please provide details of data on the impact of the policy on people with multiple identities and specify relevant Section 75 categories concerned.

There is a strong link between FSME, household income and school achievement. Children with multiple Section 75 characteristics are likely to be impacted to a greater degree than others and the effect of socio-economic disadvantage similarly impacts across all Section 75 categories. Children with multiple Section 75 characteristics are more likely to benefit from this revised policy as it seeks to address the issues that have a negative impact on pupil attendance.

### **PART THREE - SCREENING DECISION**

3.1 Please select as appropriate and provide details and reasons:

- a) The decision is not to conduct an equality impact assessment.

#### **Reasons**

The draft policy is intended to assist schools in providing the best levels of support possible to those children who are struggling to attend school on a regular basis. This embraces all settings across the Primary, Post-Primary, Special and EOTAS sectors equally.

---

## **MITIGATION**

3.2 Addressing pupil attendance is a complex challenge with the realization that interventions that may work in one school may not work in another, similarly within classes a range of different initiatives may be needed to meet a wide range of individual needs.

Other supports available for pupils and their parents/guardians within the education sector include:

- [Emotional Health and Wellbeing](#)
- [Support for parents and pupils](#)
- [Counselling service in schools](#)
- [Pupil Support Services - Education Authority](#)
- [SEN Early Years Inclusion Service - Education Authority](#)
- The [Intercultural Education Service](#) helps schools to meet the additional educational needs of pupils from our target communities: Traveller; Newcomer; Asylum-Seekers; Refugees and Roma.

## **PART FOUR- MONITORING**

Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy on any of Section 75 equality categories:

The Department collects data on a monthly basis which is at school level and as such is insufficient in its detail to allow for scrutiny of those pupils within the Section 75 categories.

The annual bulletins which separately reflects the school census and attendance data will therefore serve as the two mechanisms through which the effect of this policy can be monitored.

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

### PART FIVE - DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION

- 5.1 Will the policy in any way discourage persons with disabilities from participating in public life or fail to promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities?

No

- 5.2 Is there an opportunity to better promote positive attitudes towards persons with disabilities or encourage participation in public life by making changes to the policy or introducing additional measures?

No

- 5.3 Please detail what data you will collect in the future in order to monitor the effect of the policy with reference to the disability duties.

The annual bulletins which separately reflects the school census and attendance data will serve as the two mechanisms through which the effect of this policy can be monitored.

**PART SIX - HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUES**

6.1 Does the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project review/revised policy/pilot/project affect anyone's Human Rights?

Particularly consider:

- [The Human Rights Act \(1998\)](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities](#)
- [The United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#)

No

6.2 If you have identified a negative impact; what Human Right is impacted, what is the nature of the impact and who is affected and how?

N/A

9.3 Outline any actions which could be taken to promote or raise awareness of human rights or to ensure compliance with the legislation in relation to the policy/policy review/revised policy/pilot/project .

None

## Equality Screening: Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

### PART SEVEN - RURAL NEEDS

The undertaking of a [Rural Needs Impact Assessment \(RNIA\)](#) is an integral part of the development, adoption, implementation or review of a policy, strategy or plan or the design or delivery of a public service.

Will a separate RNIA be completed?

No

Reason for non-completion:

The draft policy serves schools in a region-wide manner that ensures no significant difference in impact between urban and rural populations.

Completed RNIA's are published on the Department's Internet site and shown under [Rural Needs Impact Assessments](#).

**Equality Screening:** Consultation on revised Pupil Attendance Strategy

## **PART EIGHT - APPROVAL AND AUTHORISATION**

### FOR COMPLETION BY POLICY TEAM

Screened by: Peter Lockhart    Grade    SO    Date 4 Dec 25

Approved by: Glen McDonald    Grade    7    Date **4 Dec 25**

### **Notes:**

The Screening Form must be approved and 'signed off' by a senior manager responsible for the policy.

The TRIM version of the completed Screening Form must be sent to the Equality Team (DE.Equality@education-ni.gov.uk) for quality assurance

### FOR COMPLETION BY EQUALITY TEAM

Screening Decision    Agreed.

Quality Assured by: G Smith

Date **4.12.2025**

Team Informed:

Date

### RECORDING AND PUBLISHING BY POLICY TEAM

You must store this completed screening form on Content Manager and finalise it. Use the record naming convention "Completed Screening form of....."

Content Manager Ref No:

ED1/25/252700

Placed on Internet by policy team

Date 10.12.2025

As soon as possible, following quality assurance, you must publish a copy of the screening form in Microsoft Word (or other Open Document Format) on the Department's website: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/publications> with a link on the "Policy Screening" page: <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/de-equality-screenings>

