



Department of
Education

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Attendance Summit

25 October 2023

Belfast Met

Attendance Summit – Agenda

09.45 - Keynote Address - Mark Browne, DE Permanent Secretary

10.00 - Young Person's experience (Ugne Gircuite)

10.10 - Interview with "Anna's" mum (Elaine Craig, EA)

10.25 - Overview of data and current issues - Claire McClelland / Dale Heaney

10.40 - Presentation #1 – Paul Blanchflower/ Judith Wylie (EWS) – Primary School Pilot

11.10 - Presentation #2 – Bernadette Lyttle, Blessed Trinity

11.40 - COMFORT BREAK

11.50 - Plenary discussion / Key Questions

12.15 - Presentation #3 – Maria Quinn / Dylan Sloan - Role of Social Workers in Schools - Abbey Community College

12.45 - Presentation #4 – Roisin Doran (EA) - Restorative Practice in Schools

13.15 - LUNCH

14.00 - Discussion in Groups / Key Questions

14.30 - Facilitated Feedback

15.00 - Panel Q&A

15.45 - Call to action

16.00 - End

Keynote Address

Dr Mark Browne

Permanent Secretary

Department of Education

Ugne Gircuite

Parent's Experience

Michelle

'Anna's' Mum

Context / Overview of Data

Claire McClelland

Director

Raising Aspirations, Supporting Learning and Empowering
Improvement

Dale Heaney

Head of Tackling Educational Disadvantage Team
Department of Education

Slido – Question 1

- On your phones: log onto www.slido.com
- In the box where it says 'Join as participant' type in 4153200
- Invite to logon and answer 4 questions during today
- Starter question 1: “What does pupil attendance mean to you and your organisation?”
- There are scribes at each table but hope to use Slido to capture main points
- There is also an opportunity to pose questions for the panel at end

Context

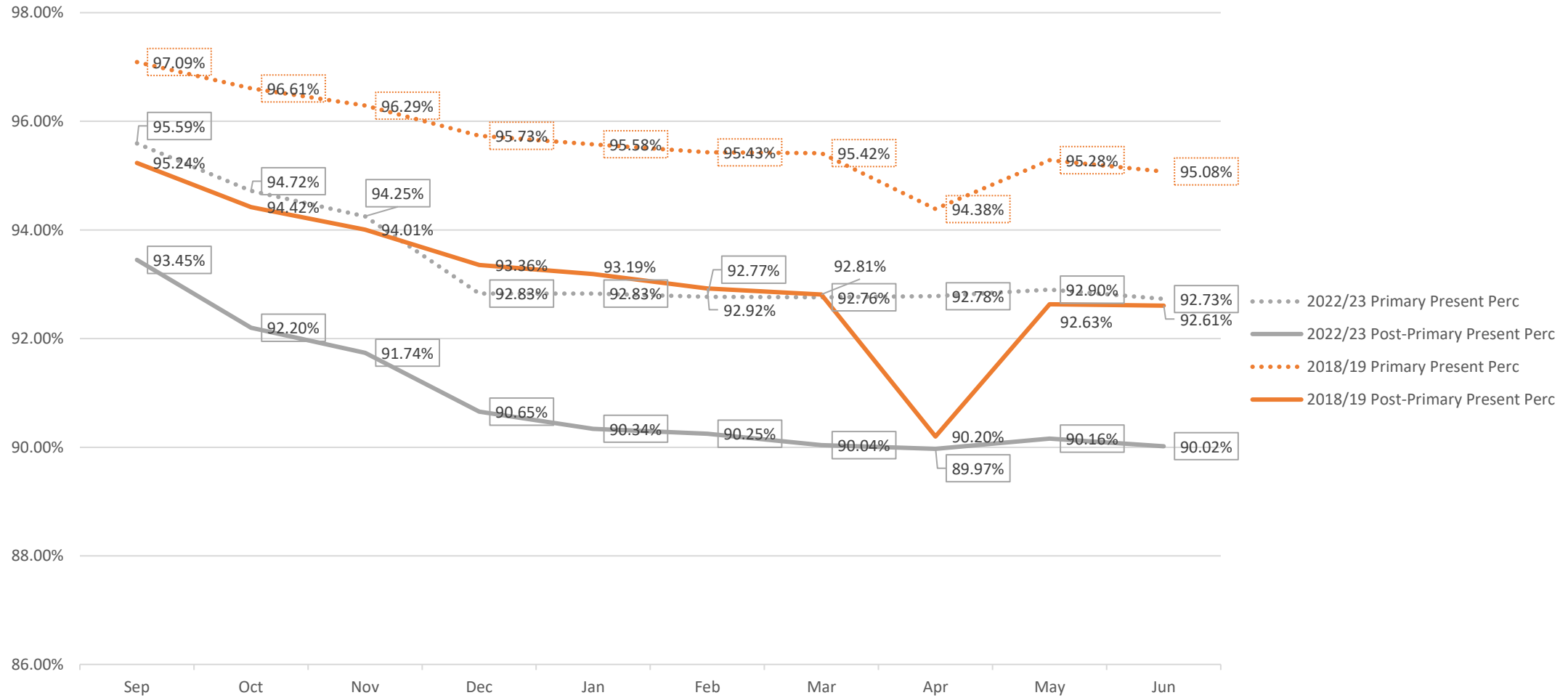
PAC Report on Improving Pupil Attendance: Follow-Up Report (2014) The Committee strongly recommends that the Department should adopt a more cohesive and joined up approach in addressing the issues associated with non-attendance.

Miss School, Miss Out Strategy (2016) (PAC Rec 1). 4 key themes:

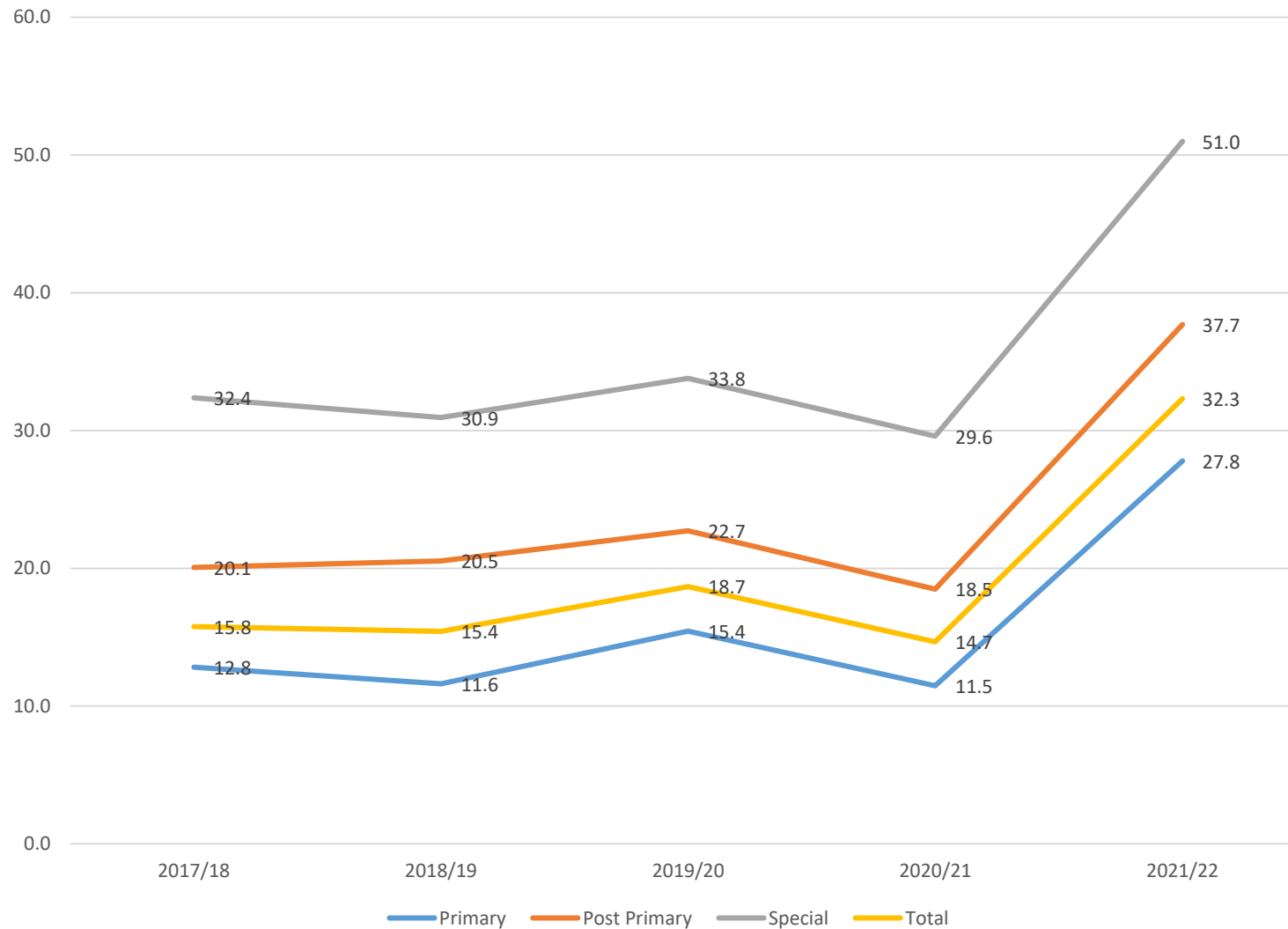
- school leadership
- early intervention
- tailored support
- collaboration and engagement

Context

2022/23 Pupil Attendance compared with 2018/19 (All Schools)



Percentage of pupils with 10% or more total absence 2017/18 to 2021/22



Absence Tiers (based on Mgt Info)

2022/23 (2021/22 in brackets)

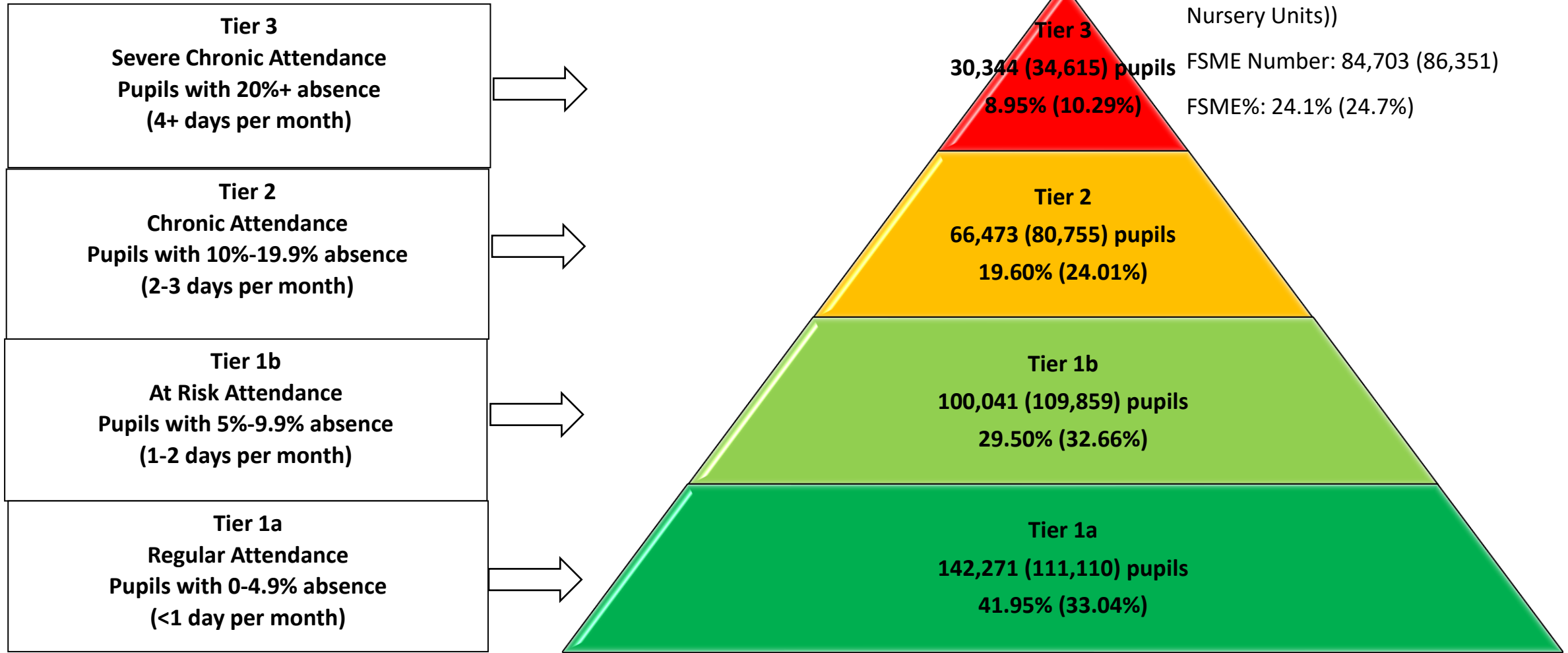
Context – Covid-19 Prevalent

Total Students: 339,129 (336,336)

Total Enrolment: 351,033 (349,069 (inc
Nursery Units))

FSME Number: 84,703 (86,351)

FSME%: 24.1% (24.7%)



Attendance and Absence Averages by FSME Band

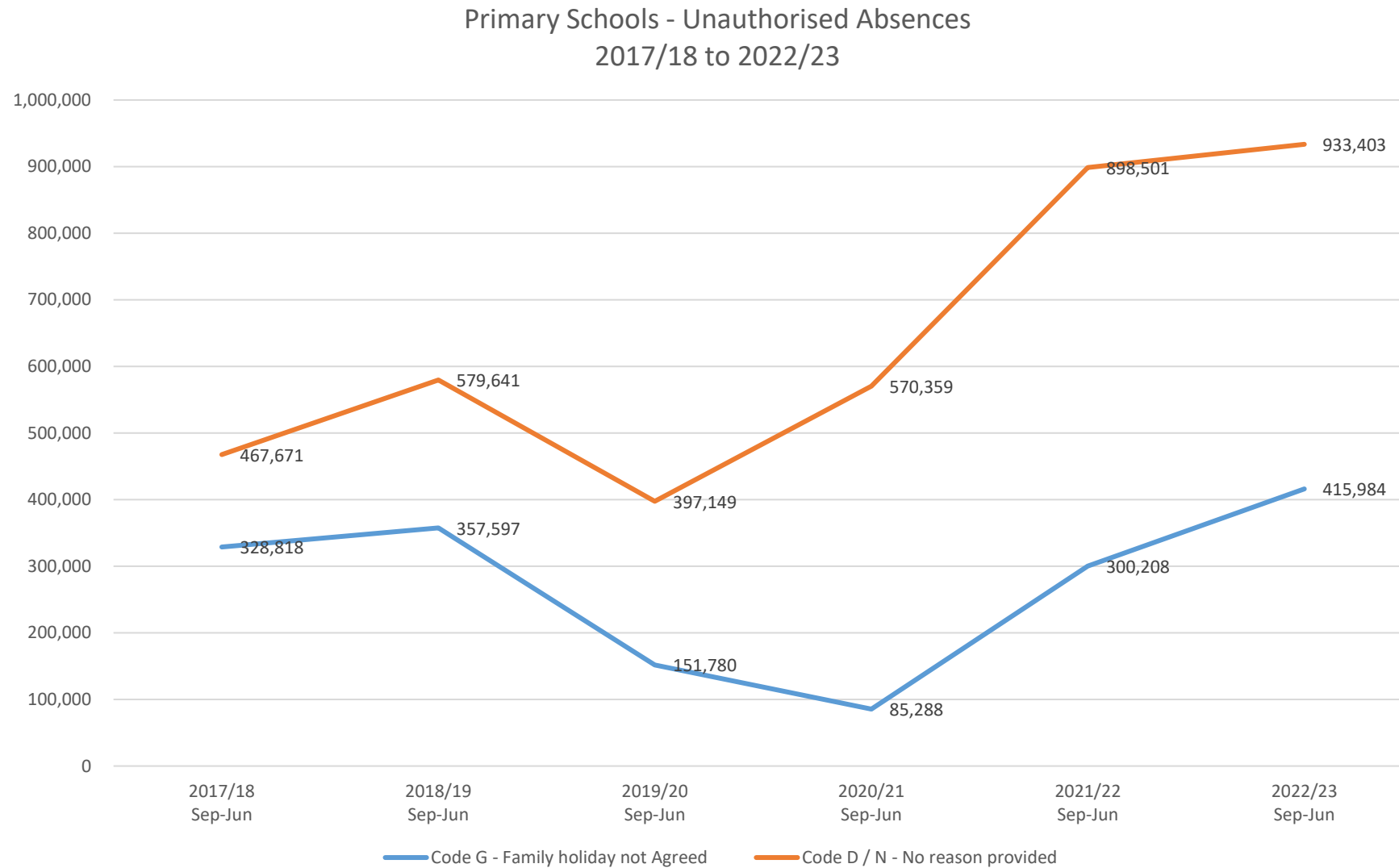
Primary Sept-June 2023											
FSM Band %	% Present	% Absent	% Authorised	% Unauthorised	Authorised as % of Total Absence	Unauthorised as % of Total Absence	% Regular	% At Risk	% Chronic	% Severe Chronic	
0.00 - 9.99	95.3%	4.7%	3.5%	1.2%	73.5%	26.5%	62.7%	26.9%	8.8%	1.5%	
10.00 - 19.99	94.2%	5.8%	4.2%	1.5%	73.8%	26.2%	53.6%	30.1%	13.4%	2.8%	
20.00 - 29.99	93.1%	6.9%	4.6%	2.3%	66.2%	33.8%	46.8%	31.4%	17.2%	4.7%	
30.00 - 39.99	91.7%	8.3%	5.0%	3.3%	60.1%	39.9%	39.6%	32.0%	21.0%	7.4%	
40.00 - 49.99	90.8%	9.2%	5.7%	3.5%	61.7%	38.3%	34.1%	32.1%	24.7%	9.2%	
50.00+	88.9%	11.1%	5.8%	5.3%	51.9%	48.1%	27.2%	29.5%	28.7%	14.7%	
Total	92.7%	7.3%	4.7%	2.6%	64.1%	35.9%	45.7%	30.5%	18.0%	5.9%	

Post Primary Sept - June 2023											
FSM Band %	% Present	% Absent	% Authorised	% Unauthorised	Authorised as % of Total Absence	Unauthorised as % of Total Absence	% Regular	% At Risk	% Chronic	% Severe Chronic	
0.00 - 9.99	94.4%	5.6%	4.2%	1.4%	75.2%	24.8%	58.5%	27.4%	11.4%	2.8%	
10.00 - 19.99	92.7%	7.3%	5.0%	2.3%	68.2%	31.8%	46.2%	31.5%	17.2%	5.2%	
20.00 - 29.99	89.7%	10.3%	5.4%	4.8%	53.1%	46.9%	32.7%	30.4%	24.6%	12.2%	
30.00 - 39.99	88.0%	12.0%	6.2%	5.8%	51.7%	48.3%	29.2%	28.2%	25.7%	16.9%	
40.00 - 49.99	85.6%	14.4%	7.6%	6.7%	53.2%	46.8%	26.0%	24.8%	26.6%	22.5%	
50.00+	85.6%	14.4%	6.1%	8.3%	42.2%	57.8%	27.8%	22.2%	26.4%	23.5%	
Total	90.2%	9.8%	5.5%	4.3%	56.2%	43.8%	38.5%	28.6%	21.2%	11.7%	

Main reasons for absence 2017/18 to 2021/22

Absence Reason	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Percentage Absent Half Days	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary	Primary
Illness (Incl Covid codes)	58.0	56.3	58.6	44.8	63.6
No Reason Provided or Other	20.4	22.0	21.1	30.0	21.5
Family Holiday Not Agreed	10.3	11.4	6.4	3.1	5.7
Absence Reason	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Percentage Absent Half Days	Post-Primary	Post-Primary	Post-Primary	Post-Primary	Post-Primary
Illness (Incl Covid codes)	51.7	49.1	52.6	39.5	53.7
No Reason Provided or Other	29.6	33.2	30.3	39.9	33.9
Family Holiday Not Agreed	3.2	3.2	2.4	0.6	1.9
Absence Reason	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22
Percentage Absent Half Days	Special	Special	Special	Special	Special
Illness (Incl Covid codes)	44.7	46.2	48.0	37.1	47.7
No Reason Provided or Other	30.0	30.5	30.0	33.9	26.4
Family Holiday Not Agreed	3.7	3.8	2.5	0.9	1.8

Primary Schools – Number of ½ day sessions



Challenges

Children and Young People / Families

- Changing attitudes to attendance
- Changing context – increased emotional health and wellbeing challenges (including Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA))
- Parents / families / TIP / ACEs

Schools / Teachers / System

- Sense of frustration from schools
- Suspensions and Expulsions
- Safeguarding and Child Protection
- Industrial Action – teaching staff and EWS
- Funding Challenges

What works?

- Leadership
- Close educational engagement with parents
- Tailored education programmes
- Creating a positive environment
- Removing barriers to learning
- Strategic monitoring, reporting and evaluating
- Incentives and disincentives

Opportunities

- EWS Review
- Social worker in schools; Home School Liaison Coordinator (HSLC); School Nurse
- End to End Review of School Improvement: Supporting Children and Young People/
Removing Barriers Workstream. Links between suspensions and expulsions; behaviour;
EHE and Restorative Practice
- Collaborative working (with other depts)
- Wrap around support around the child
- Local (place-based) solutions / RED Programme
- Employers / FE colleges / Youth workers
- Curriculum Delivery

Paul Blanchflower and Judith Wylie

Education Welfare Service

Blessed Trinity College

Bernadette Lyttle

Blessed Trinity College

Comfort Break

10 minutes

Discussion / Feedback

2. What do you think are the key issues affecting pupil attendance currently?
3. What do you think can be done to address those issues?

Role of Social Workers in Schools

Maria Quinn and Dylan Sloan

Abbey Community College

Restorative Practice in Schools

Roisin Doran

Education Welfare Service

Lunch

Return at 2pm

Discussion / Feedback

4. What can be done to improve pupil attendance in:

- The Short term
- The Long term

(consider the pros and cons)

Panel Q & A

Claire McClelland, Director, Raising Aspirations,
Supporting Learning and Empowering Improvement

Paul Blanchflower, Education Welfare Service

Roisin Doran, Education Authority

Maria Quinn, Abbey Community College

Dylan Sloan, Abbey Community College

Elaine Craig, Education Authority

Call to Action and Close

Thank you