



# Requesting daily data from state-funded schools – principles for collection and DfE use

## 1. Purpose of this document

Good attendance at school is vital for children and young people's education and their wider wellbeing. The pandemic has had an impact on school attendance, and this, coupled with challenges which existed pre-pandemic, will have a negative impact on children's life chances. We have a shared goal to improve attendance, and having better data is one thing that will allow us to achieve that aim. Access to better data at a national, regional and local level will both help highlight particular challenges and identify solutions that are currently working well and can be shared. We are therefore asking schools to share their school attendance data with DfE, as we explore ways to better collect, use and share attendance data across the system. This document describes the principles and approaches DfE use when collecting and using data provided by schools as part of this data sharing project.

## 2. Why we are asking schools to share data

DfE has ambitions to improve the way we collect, use and share data. We want to increase automated collection as much as possible in order to reduce burdens on schools. We are asking that you help us to test if this ambition is possible, and to help us shape what a solution could look like.

We are collecting this data to improve collective efforts to maximise school attendance. Data is critical in our understanding of how the system can best adapt to meet emerging needs.

The creation of the Educational Setting Status form, which provided information about attendance during the pandemic, gave us valuable insights. It was essential for the management of the pandemic but it also created a burden for schools.

We have therefore established a timely and low burden way of sharing information between schools, MATs and LAs. Wide participation in this project will increase DfE's ability to explore longer-term solutions that could reduce schools' manual data collection burdens.

## 3. The data collection mechanism

DfE is asking schools to share the daily data they already record on their management information systems.

**The sharing process is simple and quick. There are no additional burdens on schools. We are not asking schools to record new data.**

The data processing is facilitated under a commercial contract with Wonde.

DfE is requesting pupil level data that covers all attendance data, demographic data and some vulnerable children indicators. Schools will not be asked to share other data.

Schools will receive a request from Wonde to agree to share this specific data and to agree to comply with the data sharing agreement.

Once a school agrees to share data it is automatically extracted from the Management Information System by Wonde and sent to DfE each day. No daily action will be required by schools. Schools can opt-out of this voluntary data sharing at any time.

## 4. DfE use of the data you share

We know that you will want reassurance about how this attendance data may be used. We plan to do the following things:

DfE will use the data to identify national, regional and local trends and patterns of school attendance, inform policy thinking across the department, monitor and evaluate the delivery of programmes and explore if it is possible to gain additional policy insight by linking it to other data sources within DfE. Where the data suggests particular issues in schools, LAs or MATs, we are keen to signpost them to helpful resources and offer them support in improving attendance. This may include good practice sharing such as examples of where others working in a similar context have put in place particularly effective approaches. To support this further and enable the sector to make judgements on their own attendance performance, we are [publishing aggregate attendance statistics](#).

We are sharing data back with the sector through the [View Your Education Data](#) service. To better support operational planning and enable earlier attendance support to be put in place, this includes schools being able to view the data of their pupils, trusts being able to view the data of all participating schools and their pupils they are responsible for, and LAs being able to view the data of participating schools and their pupils within their area. As we increase our understanding of the potential of the data, we will improve the reporting and wider service and plan to develop a tool for schools to benchmark their attendance.

Your school level voluntary data will not be used for Ofsted or Regional Director decision making, for judgements around what constitutes a school causing concern, or for inspection, academisation or decisions to remove a school in a Trust. Instead, termly census data will continue to inform these decisions.

All data collected will be subject to data protection rules and no information that identifies a child will be shared publicly.

We will also share analysis with members of the Attendance Action Alliances. We will not share school identifiable level data with the national attendance action alliance, but we may with local attendance action alliances.

## 5. Length of this data sharing project

DfE will continue to consider the progress of this project and whether the principles in this document need to be reviewed, seeking feedback from stakeholders if we do so.

## 6. Working with the sector

DfE wants to be user centred in its approach, working closely with the sector as we develop 3 data sharing mechanisms.

During the project we will continue to welcome feedback from participating schools, MATs, LAs and stakeholders.

DfE is keen to work transparently with the sector, and so we are sharing these principles for data use. Thank you in advance for working with us on this important project.

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