

FAO:
All Principals/School Leadership/Boards of Governors

By email.

Rathgael House
43 Balloo Road
Rathgill
BANGOR
BT19 7PR

attendance@education-ni.gov.uk

8 December 2025

Dear Sir/ Madam,

LAUNCH OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION ON DRAFT “ATTENDANCE MATTERS” STRATEGY

I wish to bring to your attention, the public consultation on an updated “Attendance Matters” strategy commencing today, 8 December 2025 to 6 March 2026.

It is important that we review and refresh our approach to managing and supporting school attendance and to understand the reasons for non-attendance. Whilst the fundamental principles underpinning this strategy have not changed since “Miss School. Miss Out” strategy was published in 2016, the profile of our children has changed with significant numbers presenting with special educational needs and Emotionally Based School Non Attendance (EBSNA), and growing numbers of children choosing elective home education.

Consequently, we have updated our attendance strategy to reflect the importance of understanding the reasons for pupil absence, highlighting the benefits of relational learning and intervening early, thereby strengthening our approach to pupil attendance. This should, over time, provide the impetus needed to build upon existing effective practice in our schools.

The consultation will be accompanied by a number of workshops seeking the views of children and young people, parents and others.

The draft strategy can be accessed via the link below along with links to a set of questions for adults to complete and a separate link for the attention of young people.

I would ask that you consider these from the perspective of your respective settings and share with staff, pupils and parents/carers where appropriate in order to get a wide representation of views.

- <https://www.education-ni.gov.uk/consultations/consultation-pupil-attendance-strategy-attendance-matters>
- [Consultation questions for adults](#)

- [Consultation questions for young people](#)

Alternative formats are available on request.

Should you have any queries in regard to the draft strategy or the consultation process please contact officials by email at: attendance@education-ni.gov.uk

Yours faithfully

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire McClelland".

CLAIRE MCCLELLAND
DIRECTOR OF RAISING ASPIRATIONS AND SUPPORTING LEARNING