

Partnership & School Engagement Policy

SENbetweeners Hub UK: Policy 4.3

This document defines the statutory and operational framework for collaborative working between SENbetweeners Hub UK, Local Authorities (LAs), and mainstream educational settings. It prioritizes the "Attendance Banding Framework" to ensure that absence is addressed through the lens of unmet Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND).

1. Policy Statement & Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to ensure a unified approach to student attendance and engagement, particularly for vulnerable children and those experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). SENbetweeners Hub UK operates on the principle that "Behaviour is Communication" and that persistent absence is frequently a symptom of an undiagnosed or unsupported need.

This policy is fully compliant with:

- DfE Statutory Guidance: Working Together to Improve School Attendance (2024/25).
- The SEND Code of Practice (2015) and 2026 SEND Reforms.
- Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (EIF) regarding Inclusion and Personal Development.

2. The Attendance Banding Framework

The core of our partnership engagement is the Attendance Banding Framework. This tool allows all partners—schools, LAs, and Alternative Provision (AP) centers—to map a child's level of need directly to their attendance patterns.

Band	Profile	Attendance Impact	Intervention Strategy
Band 1	Universal / Low Need	Fluctuating (90-95%)	Quality First Teaching
Band 2	Targeted / Emerging Need	Persistent Absence (80-90%)	SEND Support Plan
Band 3	Specialist / High Need	Severe Absence (50-80%)	Multi-Agency Strategy
Band 4	Critical / Complex Need	Chronic Non-Attendance (<50%)	Alternative Provision / EHCP

3. Collaboration with Mainstream Schools

Partnership with mainstream schools focuses on the "Graduated Approach": Assess, Plan, Do, Review.

- **Reasonable Adjustments:** Schools must implement adjustments such as staggered starts, "Time-Out" cards, and designated safe persons before moving to formal absence protocols.
- **Data Sharing:** Schools will use the *SEND-Attendance Link Analysis Tool* to identify hidden needs in vulnerable groups.
- **Transition Support:** All primary-to-secondary transitions must include a "Seamless Transfer of Needs" document to prevent attendance dips in Year 7.

4. Working with Local Authorities (LAs)

SENbetweeners Hub UK acts as a bridge between educational settings and LA services (SEND, Health, and Social Care).

- **Statutory Compliance:** We assist schools in fulfilling their duty to report persistent absence through a supportive, rather than legalistic, protocol.
- **High Needs Funding:** We provide evidence for "Provision Costing & Funding" to ensure LAs allocate resources appropriate to the student's Attendance Band.
- **EBSA Protocol:** For children out of school due to mental health or sensory burnout, we follow the *EBSNA Practice Guide* to facilitate reintegration or alternative educational provision.

5. Alternative Educational Provision (AP) Centres

When mainstream environments are unsuitable, collaborative working with AP centers is required to ensure educational continuity.

- **Compliance:** All AP placements must be evidenced-based and reviewed via the *SEND Provision Audit*.
- **Reintegration:** AP centers must work with mainstream partners on flexible timetables and phased returns.
- **Vulnerable Children:** Specific focus is given to children with undiagnosed needs or those at risk of exclusion.

6. Safeguarding & Vulnerability

This policy integrates SEND and Safeguarding duties. A child's attendance profile is viewed as a risk factor for mental health and safety.

- **DSL Responsibility:** The Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) must monitor the *Attendance & Mental Health Risk Checklist* for all students in Band 3 and 4.
- **Early Help:** Persistent absence triggers an immediate review for Early Help or multi-agency involvement.

7. Approval & Authorization

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Head of Governance	 Person	_____ _____	 Date

Role	Name	Signature	Date
Designated Lead (DSL)	 Person	----- -----	 Date

Review Date:  Date (Recommended every 12 months)