

Research project on supporting pupils in Years 7-to-11 to return to school following absence: information for pupils

Why am I receiving this information sheet?

The National Foundation for Educational Research ([NFER](#)) are undertaking research into how best to support pupils returning to school following absence. We would like to invite you to take part in this project.

We understand you have recently missed some days of school, and we would like to hear how that made you feel and what it has been like coming back to school.

It is up to you if you would like to take part. We have put some information below to help you decide. Even if you decide to take part you can change your mind later.

What are the aims of the project?

Since the Covid-19 pandemic, more pupils have been missing school, especially in secondary schools. We would like to find out more about what schools can do to help pupils return to school after absence.

What will the project involve?

We would like you to take part in a focus group discussion with 3-5 other pupils. We will work with your school to make sure you feel happy taking part in a discussion with the other pupils in the group. The discussion will be led by a researcher from the NFER and will explore:

- How pupils feel when they are absent from school.
- How pupils feel about the support they received when returning to school following absence.
- Whether there are any additional forms of support that pupils believe would help them to feel more comfortable and prepared to return to school after an absence.

As part of the discussion, we will ask you for your views about a fictional character. There are no right or wrong answers, we are just interested in your views and experiences.

We will ask you if we can audio record the discussion so that the researcher can take accurate notes. This recording will be deleted as soon as the notes have been written up.

No schools or pupils will be named as part of the research. We will not share what you tell us with your school or anyone else unless you say something that makes us feel worried that you or another child might get hurt or be unsafe.

Why have you approached my school to take part?

We have asked schools to take part that have told us they are trying new approaches to helping pupils come back to school after being absent or have improved their absence rates in recent years.

How will I benefit from taking part in the research?

By taking part, you will help us to understand how schools are supporting pupils when they return after being absent. We will use this information help other schools and policy makers learn about what is working and what could be improved.

How will NFER use and protect the data collected?

We will use what you tell us to write a report for schools and policy makers about how they can help improve the way they support pupils. The report will be published on the NFER website in spring 2025.

Full details of how your personal information will be collected, stored and used can be found in our privacy notice, which is on the [project web page](#).

Who to contact?

If you have any questions or would like more information, please ask the teacher who gave you this letter.