



BARNSELEY
Metropolitan Borough Council

Barnsley Integrated Front Door and Education Welfare Service Educational Neglect Pathway

Context

Barnsley has placed attendance high on its strategic and political agenda and understands that good school attendance creates the building blocks for achieving our 2030 vision outlined in Learning Barnsley, we understand the safeguarding risks associated with non-school attendance and we strive to work in partnership to remove any barriers to non-school attendance so that each child has the best possible educational opportunities they require to thrive. This strategy aims to support professionals to identify and respond to Educational Neglect across the partnership of Childrens services.

Definition

What is Educational Neglect?

Neglect is defined in Working Together to Safeguard Children as "the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical, emotional and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development.

The Department for Education (DfE) has stated, 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect'. The NSPCC has cited, 'failure to ensure regular school attendance which prevents the child reaching their full potential academically' as one of their six forms of neglect.

Educational neglect, persistent and severe absence are recurring themes in Safeguarding Practice Reviews. In contrast, regular school attendance is a protective factor for the most vulnerable children and young people, providing opportunities for support whilst giving them the best possible start in life –Barnsley -the place of possibilities.

Healthy/Learning/Growing/Sustainable/Enabling

Professor Jan Howarth, describes "educational neglect as involving a carer failing to provide a stimulating environment, show an interest in the child's education (at school or otherwise), support their learning, or respond to any special needs, as well as failing to comply with state requirements regarding education and attendance".

The DfE has published guidance around the responsibilities for school attendance. This is guidance for maintained schools, academies, independent schools, and local authorities and came into effect from September 2022 and will become statutory in September 2024. A summary of the guidance and Barnsley's response to the guidance can be found below.

[Summary Guidance available here](#)

[Barnsley's Working Together to improve attendance available Here](#)

Why is this a safeguarding concern?

All children, regardless of age, ability, or special educational needs, are entitled to an appropriate and full-time education. There are many factors in the life of a child or that of their family that can affect school attendance, and it is important for professionals to consider the circumstances of individual cases to inform the planning of preventative support, and intervention.

Evidence and research inform us that, poor attendance increases the risks of children

- not meeting their academic potential and underachieving
- becoming NEET (not in employment, education, or training) in later life
- being victims of harm, abuse, or exploitation
- becoming involved in criminal or gang-related activity.

Serious impairment of a child's development has been evidenced when school attendance is 90% or less over an academic year. As a result, primary aged pupils have less chance of achieving academic levels in line with national averages and secondary school pupils are five times less likely to achieve five GCSE's at a pass grade.

Attendance is everyone's responsibility; we expect all schools and services to respond to irregular attendance.

Attendance Percentage, Support, and Action

90-100%

All schools should adopt a universal whole school approach (school, parent, child, and community) to attendance: Ensuring that internal policies and processes are applied to promote good attendance and/or challenge where concerns arise. Support and guidance can be found on the Education Welfare Website [Here](#)

70-90%

Schools and academies should facilitate support by removing any in school barriers to attendance and by working with parents and carers to identify and remove any barriers outside of the school, this work can be supported by undertaking an Early Help assessment (EHA) and creating a Team Around the Family (TAF) and engaging support from wider services, such as Education Welfare, 0-19, Targeted Early help and where appropriate the EHC team. Children with this level of attendance should be discussed with the school's link Education Welfare Officer advice will be provided regarding referral the Education Welfare Service.

50-70%

Where attendance remains, a concern following the implementation of the EHA and TAF, support should be reviewed in partnership with TAF members. Consideration should be given to legal intervention via EWS to support the ongoing targeted intervention. If parental consent, engagement, or cooperation is withheld, discussion with Children's Social Care via the IFD pathway should take place.

50% or less

All schools and partners to consider "educational neglect". Discussion must take place with Education Welfare Service prior to a referral into Children's Social Care. We would expect that children with this level of attendance are referred to the Education Welfare Service and that there is evidence of early intervention to remove barriers to school attendance through partnership working. Where this intervention has failed to sustain regular attendance, Children's Social Care will consider an assessment. Parental consent should be obtained prior to Children's Social Care referral, or in cases where this has been refused, parents have been notified of the referral to the Integrated Front Door.

Prior to a referral to Social Care a Graded Care Profile should be completed. The Graded Care Profile (GCP2) is a practical tool which supports practitioners to measure the quality of care, received by child/ren from their parents/carers.

In Barnsley we recognise that educational neglect can be any one or more of the following:

Parental:

- Failure to identify provision for their child or adequately maintain schooling/education provision.
- Failure to engage in school/ Local Authority meetings aimed to support school attendance and engagement.
- Failure to engage as required with the appropriate, supportive agencies such as health services that, should parents fail to do so, may lead to a delay/ deterioration in their child's development.
- Parental failure to provide substantiated reasons for absences from school.
- At least one court intervention which fails to improve attendance.
- Failure to provide a suitable education through Elective Home Education despite support to resolve this from the Education Welfare Service
- Failure to place a child on a school roll following the implementation of a School Attendance Order

Young person:

Consideration of educational neglect could be applied when a young person is old enough to determine their own actions and independently travel to and from school safely where:

- Full parental co-operation is clearly demonstrated, and educational provision offered is appropriate for the young person's needs.
- Pupil engagement and attendance levels are identified as seriously impeding their development.
- Action may have been taken previously against the parent for failing to secure regular attendance of the young person and the young person will have awareness of the impact of their disengagement.
- The young person wants to attend school, and their voice clearly states this when engagement with the child takes place, however their parent is not willing to allow their child to attend.

Key questions to consider:

1. Are the child's educational development needs being met, is this in line with expected learning milestones nationally for all children?
2. Are learning needs being addressed so that learning and educational progress can be seen appropriate to identified needs?
3. Are there aspects of the provision that are impacting negatively on the educational development of the child?
4. Is a full-time education offer in place?
5. Has each child in a family had an application made for a school place or a parental decision to Electively Home Educate been made and is this education deemed as suitable?
6. Has a referral been made to the Education Welfare Service

7. Have the correct procedures for elective home education and Children Missing Education been followed the policies for which can be found on the Education Welfare service website [Here](#)

Child risk factors	Parental risk factors	Wider agency & professionals risk factors
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adverse childhood experiences (neglect/abuse) • Disability • Substance misuse • Learning difficulties • Family unit breakdown • Bereavement • Views not taken into account in decision making about education. • Chronic ill-health • Poor mental health • Child subjected to exploitation (sexual or criminal) • Living in poverty • Going missing • Reduced or inappropriate educational or timetable provision • Child performing role of carer. • Child in receipt of multiple suspensions • Child at risk of or permanently excluded from school. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previous action regarding • poor attendance at school • Poor parental mental and emotional well-being • Substance misuse • Domestic Abuse/violence • Learning difficulties • Lack of positive parenting in childhood • Adverse childhood experiences • Poor parental engagement in education • Family history of poor engagement of other siblings in education • Unable to Provide /uninterested in development of child of any age • Disguised compliance/ noncompliance with agencies • Exploitation or criminality • Bereavement • Family breakdown • Ill health • Not following health advice that enables engagement in education. • Parental choice to EHE when this is not in the best interests of the child. • Parental failure to provide a suitable education through EHE. • Family history of multiple school/ area moves resulting in episodes of 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poverty • Unemployment • Lack of positive personal networks • Lack of sharing of information between agencies regarding concerns • Ineffective monitoring and review of reduced timetables or alternative provision • Lack of triangulation or challenge regarding information provided by parent where it raises query/ may not be substantiated. • Lack of substantiated/ reasonable information for absence • Inconsistent or unsustainable responses to agency support • Lack of health information to support a suitable Individual health care plan that supports engagement in education. • Lack of consideration of wider context e.g., of family history of poor engagement of siblings in education or previous actions not sustained. • Lack of understanding of the policies procedures regarding Elective home Education and Children missing education. • Lack of understanding of the needs of the child and family's context resulting in poor attendance and multiple exclusions.

	Children Missing Education	
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Statutory Pathways and Legal intervention delivered through referral to the Education Welfare Service.

Education Penalty Notice (Administered by Local Authority)

An early intervention where there is irregular attendance, unauthorised absence and reasonable expectation that this may change; discharges parent's liability for conviction of an offence by paying under the Education (Penalty Notices) (England) Regulations 2007.

To follow the pathways outlined below the school and the Education Welfare Service must be able to evidence that early intervention and support have not resulted in improving the attendance of the child.

Prosecution - Absolute Offence (Magistrates Court)

Prosecution of a parent, under Section 444(1) of the Education Act 1996, for irregular attendance of child with unauthorised absence: this is a strict liability offence with limited defences.

Prosecution – Aggravated Offence (Magistrates Court)

Prosecution of a parent, under Section 444(1A) of the Education Act 1996, for irregular attendance of child with unauthorised absence; parent knows about irregular attendance and fails without reasonable justification to change this, potential of custodial sentence.

School Attendance Order (Magistrates Court if not resolved)

Require parent(s), under Education Act 1996, to register a child of compulsory school age at a named school when not receiving a suitable education.

Education Supervision Order (Family Court)

12-month Order under Section 36 of the Children Act 1989 on the grounds that the child is not being suitably educated; Supervising Officer to, 'assist, advise and befriend'.