

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DIFFICULTIES



Define Fine

Parent Peer Support for School Attendance Difficulties



This resource is based on current relevant government guidance, to help parents and carers to work with professionals to assess then plan appropriate timely support relating to a child or young person's SEND and health needs and attendance difficulties.

School Attendance Difficulties are complex but all too often these children are described as being "fine in school". We need to DEFINE FINE and acknowledge barriers to attendance at the earliest signs.

Support Mental and Physical Health

Schools and colleges should develop an environment where all pupils with mental and physical health conditions feel properly supported so that they can play a full and active role in school life, remain healthy and achieve their academic potential.

Referrals to CAMHS and other Health Professionals

A child or young person may need support through referrals to CAMHS, paediatricians, Occupational Therapists, Speech and Language Therapists or specialist coaches. Schools do not have to wait for a formal diagnosis before providing support to pupils but should follow advice from health professionals, and value the views of parents and pupils.

Referral to an Educational Psychologist

An Educational Psychologist can assess a child or young person's barriers to learning and recommend appropriate interventions. This input can be useful as being unable to attend school or college is often a symptom of a significant need perhaps not yet identified.

Assess and Acknowledge Special Educational Needs and Disabilities

SEND children and young people are more likely to struggle with attendance, especially those with needs not yet fully assessed, understood and supported. SEND includes ADHD, Autism, PDA, Sensory Processing Difficulties, Dyslexia, executive functioning, processing and working memory, learning differences, and social, emotional, mental and physical health conditions. These may affect their ability to learn, to communicate or regulate emotions, or lead to masking. Missing the signs of these needs or focussing on emotionally and/or parenting based factors can cause delays in appropriate support. Schools have a duty to make reasonable adjustments to ensure SEND pupils can fully participate in school life.

Early Help and Social Services Referrals

Some families may benefit from Early Help or social care assessments, but school attendance difficulties are not necessarily safeguarding or parenting issues. It is vital that there is multi-agency understanding of the issues and guidance surrounding these difficulties. Any interventions should be led by professionals who are qualified and experienced in SEND, mental health and attendance difficulties.

Collaborate on Individualised Evidence Based Plans

It is important that children and young people, their parents, school or college and other professionals work together to develop a flexible, tailored, evidence based action plan, SEND support plan and/or an individual health care plan to remove barriers, provide support and set targets.

Plans should be shared with all staff and include training and resources.

An *EHC needs assessment may be necessary for a child or young person who is struggling with school attendance and "has or may have special educational needs and may need special educational provision to be made through an EHC plan*", or an early review if they already have an ECHP. They may need specific support, or an alternative to their current provision. Parents can make the application to the LA for an EHC needs assessment. *or statement in Wales or Scotland.

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