

Education – Signs of neglect

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Link between Safeguarding and Attendance

- **Inextricable link** between safeguarding and attendance
- **Non-school attendance is a safeguarding issue in it's own right** as children are unlikely to achieve the best possible outcomes if they do not access education
- **However** it also an early indicator of other safeguarding concerns
- **Remember....**education is compulsory, school is not
- **Most parents** fulfil their duty to educate their child by sending them to school

Status of education

ON ROLL

**ELECTIVE HOME
EDUCATION
(EHE)**

**Education other
than at school
(EOTAS)**

**Child Missing
Education
(CME)**

Link between neglect and poor school attendance

- The link between neglect and poor school attendance is not a new issue
- Back in 2012 The Department for Education accepted a recommendation that, **‘persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect and that children’s social care services should work with schools to address underlying difficulties’**.
- In 2013, the NSPCC cited, **‘failure to ensure regular school attendance that prevents the child reaching their full potential academically’** as one of their forms of neglect.



Activity

- In the chat can you answer the following question:

“what are the impacts of poor school attendance, on a child”

Link between neglect and poor school attendance cont.

- 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
- 90% attendance at school over a year, equates to 4 weeks of education missed
- Children with 80% are missing a day a week and if this continues in their secondary school, this will equate to a whole academic year being missed



NSPCC



- List the four main types of neglect as;
- **Physical neglect**
- **Emotional neglect**
- **Medical neglect**
- **Educational neglect:** not making sure a child receives an education
 - There is a legal duty to ensure children receive an appropriate education
 - However, legal intervention is seen as our last course of action

Safeguarding

- Poor school attendance is not just a school issue,
It is everyone's business
- It is often a **symptom of other issues** – it is rarely just ***“an attendance issue”*** or **“just a school issue”**
- Change perceptions
 - Professionals should consider neglect if aware of persistent and/or severe absence from school
 - Demonstrate **Professional curiosity** in relation to children not in school including those who are Electively home educated / not on roll
 - Challenge parents and carers as to why children are not in/attending school
 - Consider how to support children with Emotionally based school avoidance



**Not just about the
percent**

**No
professionals
seeing the
children**

**what
on the child, what
is the risk?**

**Is Neglect a
factor?**

**Are there patterns
certain days
sudden changes**

**completing a
request for help
and support form**

**they are isolated,
Physical/mental
health
deteriorating,**

**What
the level of
need? Look at the
RHRT Guidance**

Children's commissioner

- Children's Commissioner for England is Dame Rachel de Souza BDE, she shared that to **give children the best chance in life**, it must start with **children accessing the right education** and that they can **regularly attend school**
- The latest statistics from the Department for Education, show that **20.1% of children were persistently absent** in Autumn 2023.
- Autumn 2023, a third (**33.0%**) of children eligible for free school meals **were persistently absent**, compared to 15.7% of children who were not eligible.
- In 2021/22, **only 5% of children who were severely absent** in both Years 10 and 11 **achieved at least 5 GCSEs, including English and maths**. This **compares to 78% of children who were rarely absent** in both years who achieved the same standard.

Missing children

- Concerns that there are tens of thousands of children who are persistently or severely absent or missing from education altogether
- The Big Ask, our survey of children in England, we heard from nearly 5,000 children who said they were home educated and nearly 2,000 children who were not in school at all
- There are hundreds of children that have never interacted with the education system that we know nothing about.
- The 'known unknowns', includes children who have never been on a school roll, perhaps because they have gone missing from care or who have been trafficked into the country.

Working together to improve children's attendance

- **Came into force in September 2022 and becomes statutory guidance in August 2024**
- **Describes in detail what the DfE expects from stakeholders**
- **Guidance to help schools, academy trusts, governing bodies and local authorities maintain high levels of school attendance, including roles and responsibilities**
- **Cannot be improved through a single member of staff or organisation and must be a concerted effort across all partners.**
- **Makes attendance a key feature of all frontline council services, but especially access to education services, early help, statutory social care, and the Virtual School - Securing good attendance cannot be seen in isolation**

Current academic year up to Friday 01 March 2024



Number of pupils 36,557	Overall attendance % 92.6%	Overall absence % 7.4%	Unauthorised absence % 2.3%
Persistently absent Number of persistently absent pupils 7,832		Severely absent Number of severely absent pupils 942	
Percentage of persistently absent pupils 21.4%		Percentage of severely absent pupils 2.6%	

**SWINDON'S
CURRENT DATA**

Last 5 days (29 February 2024 to 06 March 2024)



Overall attendance % 92.1%	Overall absence % 7.9%	Unauthorised absence % 2.4%
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**NATIONAL
DATA**

Overall absence rate 6.8% during week commencing 19 February 2024	Authorised absence rate 4.3% during week commencing 19 February 2024	Unauthorised absence rate 2.6% during week commencing 19 February 2024
Overall absence rate 7.0% academic year 2023/24 to date	Authorised absence rate 4.7% academic year 2023/24 to date	Unauthorised absence rate 2.2% academic year 2023/24 to date
Persistent absence rate 20.7% academic year 2023/24 to date		

Legal intervention

- The legislation states that:
- ‘Parents have the responsibility to ensure that their children receive a suitable education, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise’ (section 7 Education Act 1996)
- Types of Legal intervention are:
 - Attendance Contracts
 - Education Supervision Orders
 - Attendance Prosecution
 - Parenting orders
 - Penalty Notices



Neglect screening tool

Category: Education	Very concerned	Sometimes concerned	Not concerned	Not Known
Non-attendance at school/nursery/college				
Developmental delay				
Inadequately prepared for nursery/school/college				
Lack of parental/carer engagement with nursery/school/college				
Withdrawn/lethargic				
Unexplained extremes of behaviour				
Educational Needs Issues Noted? Please Provide Details :	Yes	No	Not Sure	
Any additional comments/analysis:				
Category: Feeding and eating	Very concerned	Sometimes concerned	Not concerned	Not known
Little or no food in cupboards				

EWS - team

- Who are we and what do we do?
- A new all age team that includes EET and Education Safeguarding Advisers, increased EWO capacity, new permanent leadership
- All schools have a Single Point of Contact (SPOC)
- Schools are allocated on a locality basis for intervention
- Weekly Attendance drop-in open to all professionals where there are attendance concerns
- Weekly Attendance update



Final word....

**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IS
EVERYONE'S BUSINESS**