

Educational Neglect Advice

WHAT IS EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT?

The Department for Education has stated that 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect'. The NSPCC cites 'not making sure a child receives an education' as one of their four main types of neglect.

[Working Together to Safeguard Children](#) defines neglect 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".

Professor Jan Horwarth, 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".



WHY IS IT IMPORTANT TO HIGHLIGHT PERSISTENT / SEVERE ABSENCE AND EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT?

Persistent / severe absence and educational neglect are recurring themes in Child 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 a good start in life. It enables school staff to observe any changes or patterns that may indicate potential signs of neglect, abuse, child exploitation, mental health problems, or other vulnerabilities.

Educational neglect of a child, which significantly impacts their welfare and/or educational outcomes, is likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health; well-being, development and/or life chances.

PERSISTENT / SEVERE ABSENCE AND EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT

[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#) defines:

Persistent absence is when a child's school attendance is at 90% (4 weeks missed in an academic year/3 terms).

Severe absence is when a child's school attendance is at/below 50% (19 weeks missed in an academic year/3 terms).

This may be exacerbated by poor routines and boundaries, lateness, or a lack of parental engagement.

Schools, local authorities and partners are expected to work together to put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers to attendance and re-engage these pupils.

Hampshire and Isle of Wight Safeguarding Children Partnerships recognise that educational neglect should be considered when one of the following have been met, over the previous 3 school terms:

- Parent(s) failing or inadequately maintaining schooling or identifying provision for their child;
- Parent(s) regularly failing to attend school and Local Authority meetings to address attendance concerns.
- Ineffective engagement with support that would have been likely to improve the educational development of their child;
- The child's school attendance is 75% or less*

and both:

- Parent unable to provide substantiated reasons for most absences from school; and
- The case to have been presented at the Legal Intervention Team (Hampshire)/School Attendance Enforcement Panel (IOW)

*It is possible for educational neglect to be considered if a child / young person refuses to attend school / adhere to parental boundaries.



ALL PRACTITIONERS SHOULD:



- Consider the significance of educational neglect if they become 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 school roll.
- Challenge parents and carers as to why children are not attending school or frequently late.
- Consider how they and others might resolve the absence from school. E.g. Screen for Emotionally Based School Avoidance.
- Seek advice from the child's school and/or the Inclusion Support Service (Hampshire)/Education Inclusion Service (IOW) if they are concerned about a child's attendance.
- Use the threshold chart to consider the child and family's wider circumstances to see if submitting an [Inter-Agency Referral form](#) is required.
- Ensure that where a child has a child in need plan or child protection plan, and there are concerns around their attendance, that this is reflected in the plan.

WHEN SHOULD WE BE CONCERNED ABOUT SCHOOL ATTENDANCE?

90-100%	75-90%	Below 75%
All schools should adopt a universal whole school approach (school, parents, child, and community) to attendance, ensuring that internal policies and processes are applied to promote good attendance and/or challenge where concerns arise.	Schools should consider all early help (single agency) options including children's centres, school nursing, mental health support teams, inclusion support and police etc or an early help assessment may be offered.	School attendance should trigger schools and partners to consider 'educational neglect'. Multi-agency targeted support should be considered following the completion of an early help assessment.*

* Where there are additional safeguarding concerns, please use the [threshold chart](#) and submit an [Inter-Agency Referral Form](#).

WHAT THE DATA/RESEARCH TELLS US

There is a demonstratable link between absence and attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4. Pupils with higher attainment at KS2 and KS4 had lower levels of absence over the key stage compared with those with lower attainment.

- Pupils who did not achieve the expected standard in reading, writing and maths in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 4.7%, compared with 3.5% among pupils who achieved the expected standard and 2.7% among those who achieved the higher standard.
- Pupils who did not achieve grade 9 to 4 in English and Maths GCSEs in 2019 had an overall absence rate of 8.8% over the key stage, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved a grade 4 and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 9 to 5 in both English and maths.

- Research shows associations between regular absence from school and extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study ([Working together to improve school attendance](#))).
- [School attendance has a positive impact children and young people's wellbeing](#). Research shows poor school attendance can impact a child's future, not just through their educational achievement but also socially and developmentally.

SUPPORTING RESOURCES



- [Hampshire and Isle of Wight Threshold Chart](#)
- [HSCP and IOWSCP Neglect Threshold and Indicator Chart](#)
- [HSCP and IOWSCP Neglect Toolkit](#)
- [Toolkit for schools: Communicating with families to support attendance](#)
- [Emotionally based school avoidance practice guidance for schools and other support agencies](#)
- [Isle of Wight Early Help](#)
- [Hampshire Early Help](#)
- [Isle of Wight Council School Attendance](#)
- [Hampshire Attendance Guidance for Parents/Carers](#)

ATTENDANCE LEVELS

