

SCHOOL ATTENDANCE DIFFICULTIES AND EMOTIONALLY BASED SCHOOL NON-ATTENDANCE

Trafford Guidance Document (V2.0)

September 2023

A guidance document to support professionals working with children and young people in Trafford who may be experiencing school attendance difficulties.

With thanks to:

Trafford Educational Psychology Service, Trafford Pupil Absence Team, Trafford Early Help and First Response Team, Trafford SEN Advisory Service, Trafford SENDIASS, Trafford Thrive, Trafford Virtual Schools Team, Trafford CAMHS, Trafford Vulnerable Children's Team, Trafford Parent Forum, STEP, Calm Connections, Heart and Mind Learning, and Spectrum Gaming

This document was written with reference to West Sussex Educational Psychology Service's guidance, and we would also like to extend our thanks to them.

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Introduction

This guidance has been developed to provide further information and support for children and young people who are experiencing school attendance difficulties and/or Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA), and to support their families, school staff and other professionals across our Local Authority.

The link between school attendance and attainment is well evidenced; pupils with the highest attainment at the end of Key Stages 2 and 4 have higher rates of attendance over the key stage compared to those with the lowest attainment.

What is Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance?

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) is a term adopted by Trafford Council and a number of authorities to describe children and young people who have significant difficulties in attending school due to a range of factors. This is distinct from other types of school non-attendance and relates specifically to the emotional distress that they experience around attending school (Thambirajah, Grandison & De-Hayes, 2008).

How does this relate to the Working Together to Improve Attendance guidance?

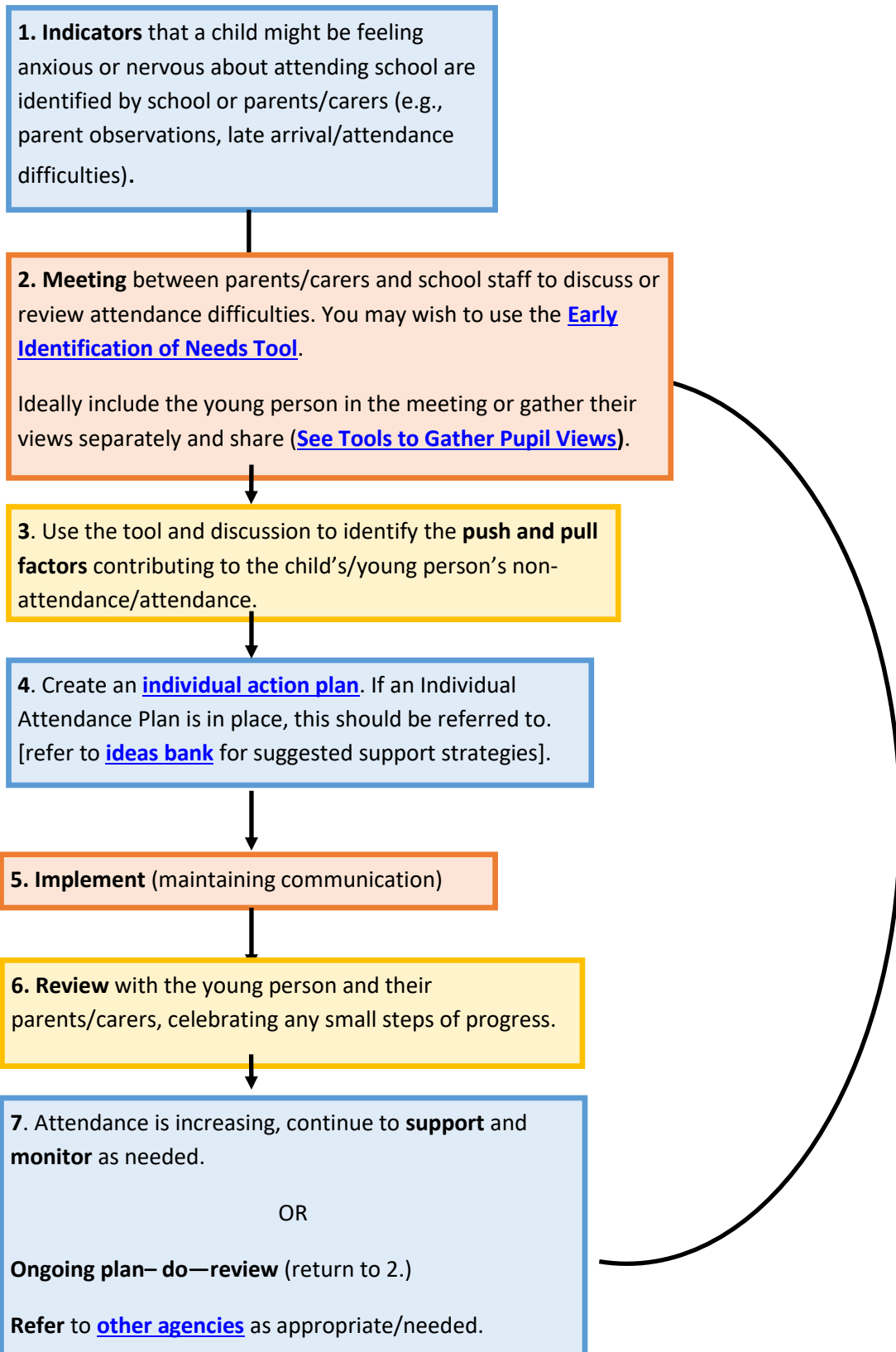
The Department for Education has recently released [this guidance](#) which sets out the roles, responsibilities and expectations for schools, academy trusts, governing bodies, local authorities, and parents in promoting and maintaining high levels of school attendance. The Government is committed to the guidance becoming statutory from September 2024. This document will include reference to how professionals working in this area can fulfil these roles and responsibilities, by working in an evidence-informed way to improve school attendance.

How can we support children and young people?

The following flow chart represents the process of support that should be followed when a child or young person is identified as experiencing difficulties attending school (or as at risk of becoming persistently absent). This may be triggered by concerns shared by school staff, parents/carers, or a reduction in the child's attendance. Further information around each area can be found by clicking on the links within the flow chart or in the information overleaf.

It is important that this cycle of support is completed **promptly**, and that the support and progress is **agreed and regularly reviewed** with the young person and their family (e.g., every 3 – 4 weeks). Research suggests that early intervention is the best approach to maintaining regular school attendance.

Flow Chart of Support



Understanding EBSNA

What is Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance?

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) is a term adopted by Trafford Council, as well as a number of nearby authorities. It describes children and young people who have significant difficulties in attending school due to a range of factors. Schools sometimes adopt the phrase 'School Refuser' when discussing this group, however this has been challenged by young people as the term 'refuser' suggests the child or young person has control over the school non-attendance. Additionally, it locates the 'problem' within the young person/child and ignores important environmental factors that influence a child or young person's emotional confidence to attend school.

Pupils do not typically perceive their non-attendance as 'refusal', but rather a 'straightforward and understandable' response to their circumstance, preferring to use the terms "stopped going" or "dropped out". They have shared that the experience was one of feeling 'ground down' by the pressures of school, eventually resulting in their non-attendance (Pennick, 2012). Many young people can hold high academic aspirations, despite their difficulties, and perceive non-attendance very much a **last resort** for them (Corcoran and Kelly, 2022).

In line with the DfE's [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) guidance, school staff should proactively use data to identify pupils at risk of poor attendance, this includes identifying those children and young people who may be at risk of school-related anxiety and paying attention to any parental concerns.

What does school related anxiety look like?

At home, or at school, children or young people may display their emotional distress in a variety of different ways. It is also important to acknowledge that children and young people may present as being 'ok' whilst in school yet display a high level of distress at home. This can happen when a child or young person 'masks' how they feel in an attempt to 'fit in'. It is therefore important to **listen to parental/carer concerns** and what they communicate about their child's behaviours.

Professionals and schools in Trafford have reported children and young people experiencing school related anxiety can present in the following ways:

- Finding it difficult to get out of bed/leave the house/get out of the car on school days
- An increase in emotional dysregulation at certain times e.g., on Sunday nights, before the start of the school term/half term, on certain school days etc
- Frequently communicating that they feel unwell or psychosomatic symptoms (illness caused by or exacerbated by feelings of stress)
- Distress on separation from parent/caregiver
- Dysregulated behaviours (tears and anger) on return home from school
- Withdrawn or dysregulated behaviours in school
- Finding it difficult to talk about or engage in activities related to school
- Comments made by child/young person that indicate that they are feeling unhappy about school or key aspects of school

Why does it happen?

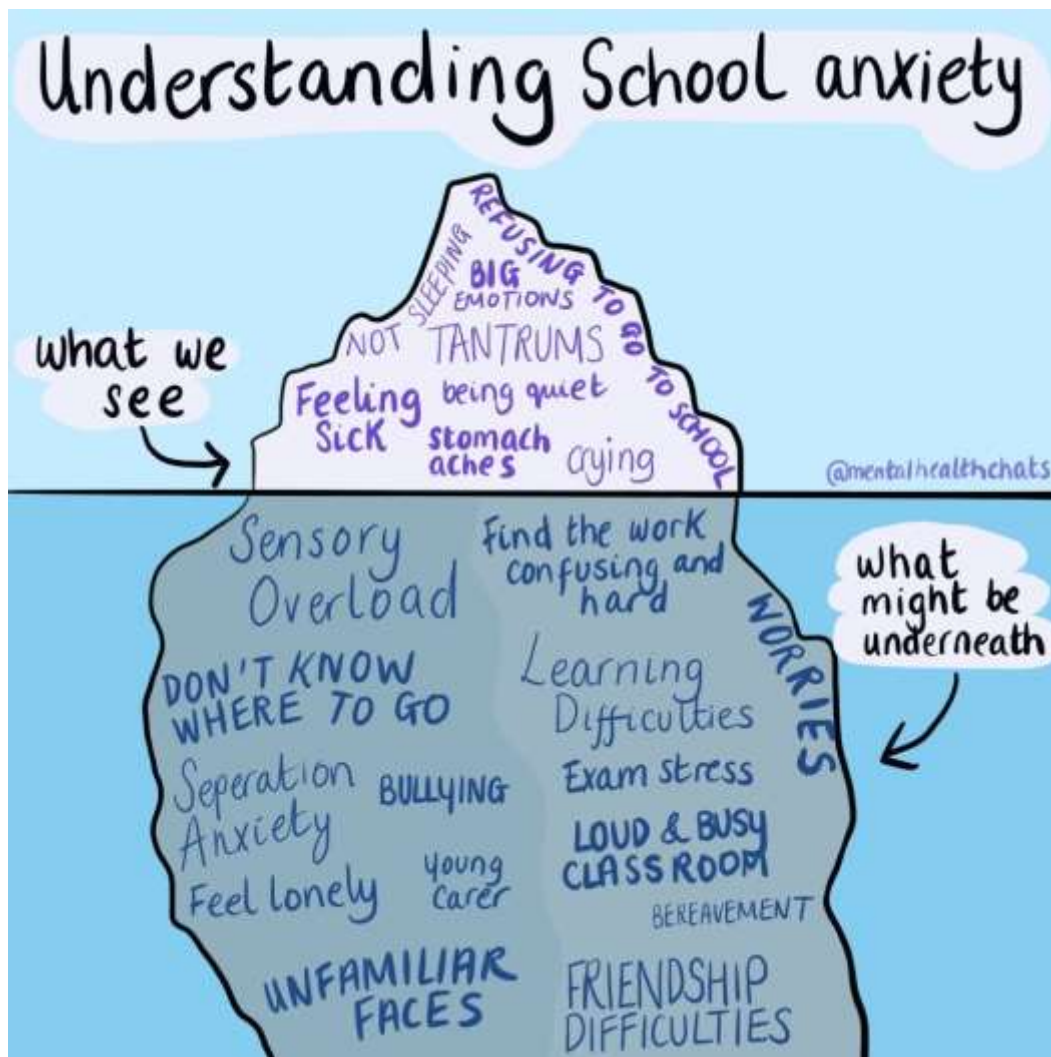
There is no singular cause. EBSNA is underpinned by a number of complex and interlinked factors of relevance to the child/young person, the family and the school environment. West Sussex local authority have adopted a useful way of considering how to reduce the factors that reinforce non-attendance and increase the resilience factors that may support a child/young person to more confidently attend and feel happier in a school environment.

As highlighted in the [West Sussex materials](#), the literature suggests that these contributory factors of 'risk and resilience' can also be divided, and understood, in terms of 'push' and 'pull' factors.

- 'Push' factors (i.e., those that push the child towards attending school)
- 'Pull' factors (i.e., those pull the child away from attending school)

Thambirajah et al (2008)

Emotionally Based School Avoidance is most likely to occur when the risks are greater than resilience, when **stress and anxiety exceeds support**, and when the 'pull' factors that promote school avoidance overwhelm the 'push' factors that encourage school attendance.



Understanding what may support the child/young person to return to school

Using the information collected using the **Early Identification of Needs Tool (EINT)** and **views of the child/young person**, you can consider the push and pull factors that may be contributing to the child/young person's feelings about going to school and feelings about staying at home. Refer to our [case studies](#) to see a worked example of how you might go about this.

We have also created an [ideas bank](#) which relates to the EINT which you can refer to for practical ideas for support, provision and sign posting. The [action plan](#) template may provide a useful tool to record these discussions.

Once school attendance difficulties have been identified, it is essential to work with each identified pupil and their parents to understand and address the reasons for absence, including any in-school barriers to attendance.

- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 5]

Recognising those at risk

Whilst it is possible to support a child/young person experiencing EBSNA back into school, early identification and intervention is likely to lead to greater success. It is therefore important for schools to be attentive to:

- a child or young person's communication (both verbally and through their behaviours)
- staff and parent/carer concerns
- patterns of punctuality and attendance
- identification of those at higher risk.

Groups at higher risk of EBSNA:

- Children and young people with sensory processing, social communication needs or a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum
- Children and young people who experience separation anxiety from their parents/carers
- Children and young people experiencing interpersonal difficulties with peers or teaching staff
- Children and young people demonstrating low confidence or 'high pressure' in relation to their learning ability or performance
- Children and young people who have experienced significant trauma, loss or change
- Children and young people who have family members who have experienced EBSNA
- Children and young people who regularly communicate emotional distress at home and/or school
- Children or young people who have historically needed emotional support in school and/or who have demonstrated erratic patterns of attendance who are transitioning to or have recently transitioned to a new Key Stage or school setting
- Children and young people who have found it difficult to adjust to changes in schooling arrangement associated with COVID-19 and/or the return to normal school routines

Where absence becomes persistent, put additional targeted support in place to remove any barriers. Where necessary this includes working with partners.

- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 6]

Autism and Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance

School attendance can be very stressful for autistic children: in a study of school attendance in autistic children and young people, 43% missed 10% or more of school. The most common reason given for non-attendance was “refusal” to go to school (Totsika et al., 2020).

For many autistic students, school is a challenging and difficult place: in fact, only 26% of autistic pupils report being happy in school (National Autistic Society, 2023). It is unsurprising, then, that a lot of autistic children and young people struggle with attending school: it seems to be a particularly difficult environment for them.

This is compounded by autistic children and young people masking their difficulties in school with families reporting their distress at home but school staff believing that they are “fine in school.”

It is important that schools audit how autism friendly they are to make schools a less stressful place for autistic children and young people to attend, so that more of them are happy in school- and so much more likely to be able to attend without detriment to their health.

Below are links to two recommended resources to help understand and support autistic children and young people who may be anywhere from starting to show subtle signs of school distress as reported by their families, or perhaps experiencing obvious difficulties with attending school or even feel unable to attend at all.

[How Can Schools Better Support Neurodivergent .pdf \(wsimg.com\)](#): this document was produced by autistic adults and young people in Greater Manchester.

[School Exclusions – School stress and anxiety \(autismeducationtrust.org.uk\)](#) ; guidance on how school stress and anxiety can lead to EBSNA.

Attendance in the Early Years

Starting school can be an emotional step for parent/carers and children. Parents and school have expectations about how this might be. The move from a PVI setting to ‘big school’ can be a huge change. Some children transition easily while for others it may cause anxiety. This is more noticeable in children with SEND, particularly those with social & communication needs. Anxiety may not be shown as school non-attendance at this stage but high levels of anxiety may be evident through the child’s emotional regulation in school and/or the home. There can be a significant difference between how the child presents in these environments. A positive start to school is an important building block for the child’s journey through school and may reduce the risk of EBSNA. Refer to our [Top Tips for the EYs transition handout](#) for further advice.

What do young people say?

Effective intervention and support requires an understanding of the perceived 'push and pull' factors contributing to attendance from the perspective of the child/young person, as well as those around them (e.g., parents/carers, key adults in school).

The following study has been conducted with researchers at the University of Manchester, exploring children and young people's experiences of school attendance difficulties across the UK. The views of over 60 pupils were included, resulting in the following themes:

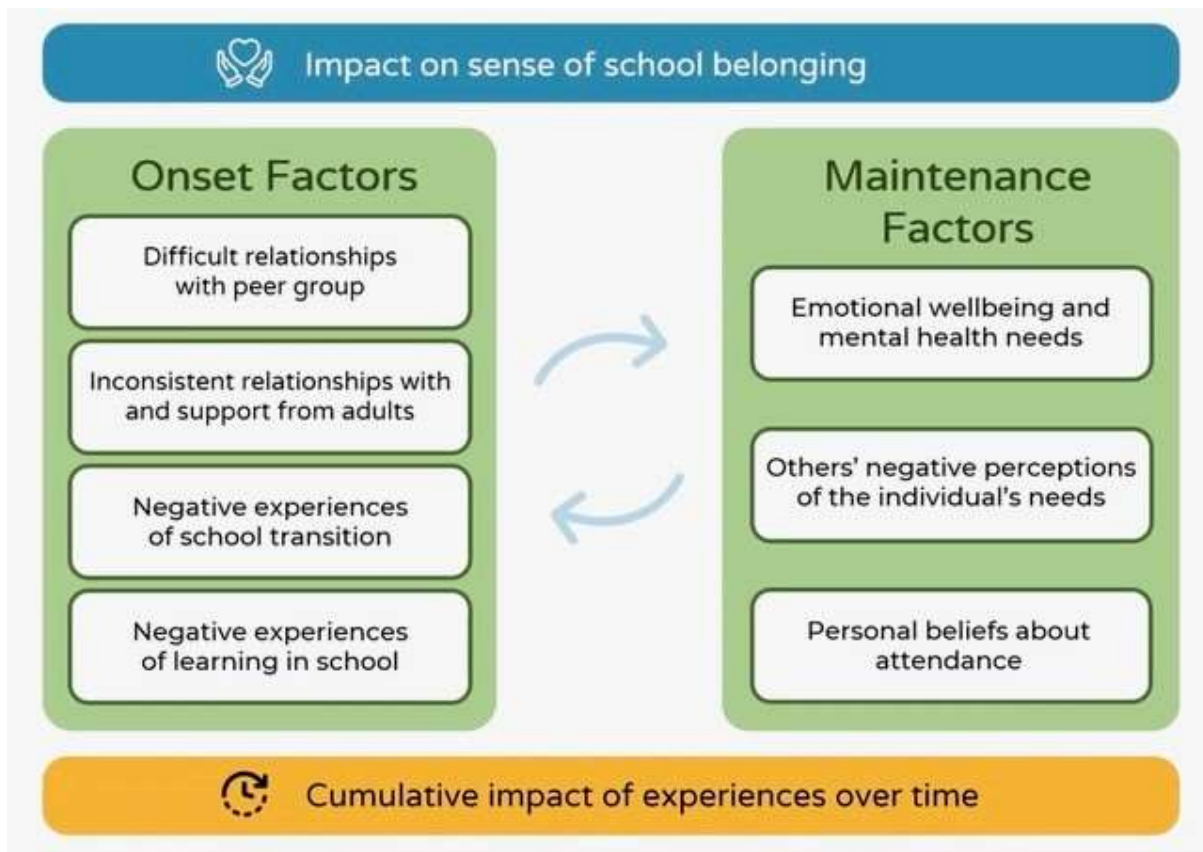


Figure 1: Young People's Experiences of Extended School Non-Attendance in the Literature (Corcoran and Kelly, 2022)

Factors impacting the onset of attendance difficulties

1. Difficult relationships with peer group

A sense of peer belonging was identified as very important to the young people. They identified barriers to this as being a fear of or perceived bullying and difficulties socialising, conforming to social norms, and forming friendships. This tells us that additional support to develop and maintain positive relationships within their peer group may aid regular attendance.

2. Inconsistent relationships with and support from adults

Many of the young people feared their teachers and perceived them as reluctant to provide support. The support offered was viewed as inconsistent and slow, relating to a lack of perceived validity of the young people's needs and their often-compliant behaviour in school. Positive relationships with teachers were viewed as a protective factor and family members were also identified as 'believing' the young people's needs and supporting their attendance.

3. Negative experiences of school transition

Many of the young people described their transition into a new school as a negative experience. Secondary school was a 'hostile and unwelcoming' environment, which felt very different to their more positive primary school experiences. Relationships with peers became more difficult at secondary school and this could be exacerbated by a loss of friendships over the transition. This suggests that a supported transition and consideration of inclusion within secondary schools will aid regular attendance at school.

4. Negative experiences of learning in school

Pupils noted a lack of support in their lessons, pressure of completing formal exams, and a perceived lack of purpose to their learning. This was mitigated through more interactive teaching approaches and quieter classroom environments. The impact of missed learning over time was also discussed, due to both non-attendance and not having their learning needs met. One suggestion within this theme is for school staff to send work home, minimising the impact of non-attendance on the young person's attainment and progress.

Factors impacting the maintenance of attendance difficulties

5. Emotional wellbeing and mental health needs

Many young people shared that they had experienced anxiety and/or depression, prior to, or because of, their non-attendance. They described their anxiety as controlling them and held many fears about the return to school, particularly around potential bullying and staff reprimands.

Some shared that their depression was a result of not being understood by others and described feeling a need to hide their emotions. They felt isolated and noted that even whilst at school, situations of informal non-attendance, such as exclusion from lessons, increased this sense of isolation.

6. Others' negative perceptions of the individual's needs

Each of these experiences was identified to lead to the young people feeling 'different', and not valued or accepted. The young people also shared experiences of being negatively labelled due to a lack of understanding, e.g., 'lazy' or 'choosing not to come in' and being questioned upon their return regarding why they had been off. The resulting sense of shame made it harder to transition back to school after a period of absence and pupils suggested that a script to aid explanations of their absence have been helpful.

Conversely, adults who were perceived as supportive, who answered questions and who recognised the young people's strengths were valued. These adults also gave the young people more autonomy around when to return to school.

7. Personal beliefs about attendance

Many of the young people held others responsible for their non-attendance and felt **helpless** to change this. Despite this, a protective factor for school attendance were the young people's future aspirations and seeing a purpose in attending school, which motivated them to attend.

Cumulative impact of experiences over time

Many of the young people felt 'ground down' by the pressures of school, describing a gradual decline in their wellbeing eventually resulting in their non-attendance. They discussed the cumulative impact of their experiences over time, with each difficulty building on and worsening the next and resulting in a feeling that they had "just been off too long [to go back]".

Sense of school belonging

The experiences described above appear to suggest that extended school non-attendance needs can arise from a reduced feeling of school belonging. The young people generally associated concepts (1) – (4) with the onset of their difficulties, while responses (5) – (7) were more typically associated with maintenance. This aligns with previous research which found that pupils were more likely to identify school-based factors as limiting their attendance compared to home-based or individual factors.

Increasing pupils' sense of safety and belonging in school is frequently recommended as an intervention approach for supporting pupils with attendance difficulties.

What can we do?

We need to unpick the factors behind pupils' attendance difficulties to appropriately direct support and promote a sense of belonging. There are a range of tools available to do this, including discussion prompts, card sorts and questionnaires. The research also highlights the impact of language and perceptions of pupils and suggest that practitioners should carefully consider their framing of needs in this area, avoiding terms such as 'avoidance' and 'refusal' and using pupils' preferred terms.

These findings appear to align with the current national picture; in the recent State of the Nation 2022: children and young people's wellbeing report (DfE, 2023), they found:

"In June 2022, 30% of children reported that they felt that they belonged at their school every day, while 41% reported feeling safe every day, and 15% reported enjoying coming to school every day.

There was a strong relationship between school belonging and wellbeing."

Parental Engagement and Support

Working together with parents and carers is an essential element to supporting regular school attendance (Corcoran et al., 2022). Recent research suggests that 'Unmet SEN' and 'Lack of support from school' were cited by parents as the most common causes of EBSNA (Sawyer, 2022). Within this research, parents shared that Educational Psychologists and other LA Services were rated as the 'most useful' forms of support, followed by SENCOs. This suggests that a professional knowledge of SEN is important when providing attendance support.

Within Trafford, parents and carers have previously shared their experiences of not feeling listened to by school staff or of experiencing blame for their child's difficulties. This can be mirrored by school's experiences of families struggling to engage with support and emphasises the importance of building and maintaining a positive home-school relationship. In collaboration with Trafford Parent Carer Forum, families in Trafford have shared the following as having been helpful:

Compassionate professionals:

- Listen to the child's voice, or their advocate. Trust and listen to parent's concerns.
- Provide a nurturing environment with good pastoral support.
- Team of trusted adults to protect from staff turnover/absence.
- Trusting relationships, where professionals fulfil promised actions.
- Understand the child's needs and see past the behaviour, ("I can see you are a good person").

Knowledgeable, well-trained professionals:

- Someone from senior leadership team being aware and actively involved in the support plan.
- Professionals listen to the family, taking ownership and leadership within the support. Ensure a non-judgemental, trustworthy advocate is there for the family (may not be school staff).
- Professionals accept fault when things go wrong or do not happen.
- Staff understand SEN (with or without diagnoses) and support referrals for assessment or specialist support where needed. Have knowledge of masking and trauma-informed approaches to support families.
- Provide clear communication, including clarity around SEN processes and fulfil promises to families. Avoid using jargon and acronyms and use parents' names (not mum/dad).
- Signpost families effectively to peer support and other services (e.g., Trafford Parent Forum, STEP, SENAS, SENDIASS, Calm Connections).

Reasonable adjustments in school (a legal requirement within the Equality Act, 2010):

- School being flexible, e.g., soft start/uniform adjustments/environment changes if needed etc.
- A consistent safe space for the child, and the ability to subtly leave class if they are struggling.
- A consistent adult to greet them at the door.
- Lowering demands and taking pressure off the child when needed.

These approaches also align with national findings around effectively supporting families and young people with their attendance.

Square Peg asked 2,000 families what would help unblock barriers to school attendance:

1. Flexibility
2. Reasonable adjustments
3. Prioritising wellbeing and happiness
4. Staff training
5. Kindness
6. Pastoral and mental health support
7. Proactive SENCO
8. Trusting parental opinion/experience
9. Accommodations/creative thinking
10. Inclusion for SEN, disability, and ill health

Resources

Alongside school-based support, it may be useful to signpost families to the below:

- **Trafford Parents Forum:** we support and work with parent carers and families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) with or without a diagnosis across all areas of disability and disability across Trafford.
<https://www.traffordparentsforum.com/>
- **Trafford Stronger Together Empowering Parents (STEP):** STEP are a support service within Trafford Parents Forum. We provide emotional and practical support and advice for parent/carers of children and young people with SEND in Trafford. We also have a team of trained volunteers who can act as mentors for parent carers.
<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/service.page?id=ZhVo9t8DDmU>
- **Trafford Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (Trafford SENDIASS):** provides impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND, as well as their parents and carers.
<https://sendiass.trafford.gov.uk/Home.aspx>
- **Trafford Family Information Service (FIS)** provide free, impartial, confidential information and advice to mums, dads, carers, young people and professionals on a range of subjects.
<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/service.page?id=IF414N9vuKU>
- **Calm Connections:** supports parents, caregivers and the whole family of children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health challenges.
<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/service.page?id=dF5YX4tPx04>
- **Not Fine in School:** a resource for the growing numbers of families with children experiencing school attendance barriers. <https://notfineinschool.co.uk/families>

The SPIRAL Principles

Sawyer's (2022) six themes (outlined below) can be viewed as principles for practice and can act as a guide to schools and professionals when supporting children and families:

	Supporting parents	Our reflections/actions
S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the professionals supporting the child have an awareness of the wider family needs? Do the parents need support to access services, understand their child's needs or with practical aspects such as childcare, transport and finances? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do parents have access to appropriate emotional support and reassurance, either from professionals or supportive family members/ friends? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can parents access support from other parents experiencing similar difficulties in a safe and structured way? E.g., parenting groups, via the school or through workshops/charities? 	
P	Promoting Children and Young People's Sense of Belonging	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does the child have positive relationships with adults/peers within school? Are there strategies in place to support them to develop these before re-entering the school environment? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the child's views and interests been sought? Either through the child or through the parent as an advocate? Are they involved with decisions and plans made for them? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Is the child's psychological wellbeing being prioritised? Have strategies been put into place to ensure that the child feels safe and secure in their environment? Do parents and schools share the same priorities? 	
I	Informing and Including Parents	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do the parents have a positive and trusting relationship with any staff members? If not, how can trust be improved? Is there regular communication in place between home and school? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have the parents' views been gathered and acknowledged within support plans? Have efforts been made to ensure that they understand the process and feel listened to? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do parents have access to clear information around SEND support? Have they been 	

	signposted to relevant information and services? Does the school have a clear EBSNA policy or pathway?	
R	Raising Awareness of EBSNA	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Has the school received training in EBSNA or supporting CYP with anxiety? Do staff feel confident supporting anxiety within the classroom? Does the school have access to appropriate guidance to support early intervention and understanding? Is there a procedure in place for identifying CYP at risk of EBSNA? Are these monitored over time with collaboration with families? Do schools understand the risk factors that may place CYP vulnerable to EBSNA? 	
A	Accessing appropriate professionals	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Which professionals would be most useful to support action planning when considering the child's needs, circumstances, and experiences? Is holistic support required for the whole family or more specifically to support the child's SEN? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Have involved professionals worked in collaboration with parents and included them within their assessment/ recommendations? Is there a clear referral pathway for parents and schools to access professional support? 	
L	Lessons learnt from Covid	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> How did the child cope during the Covid-19 school closures? Did they access home learning? Did their anxiety levels reduce? 	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Can remote forms of support be put into place while the child is not attending? Can their learning or building of relationships be facilitated remotely? What did the school put in place to support children with anxiety to transition back into school following the lockdown period? Is any of this applicable now? 	

Taken from: Parents' views on EBSNA: A solution-based exploration into successful reintegration (Sawyer, 2022).

Assess, Plan, Do, Review cycles to support school attendance

1) Assessment of Need

Building up a picture of the child/young person’s needs

Once indicators of school attendance difficulties have been identified, it is important to collaboratively build up a picture of what may be driving the difficulties in order to appropriately inform intervention. A lead professional or key adult should take responsibility for having overview of and maintaining the support plan and should consider how to work effectively with the child’s [parents/carers](#) throughout this process.

Early Identification of Needs Tool (EINT)

In collaboration with the University of Manchester, several Trafford schools, parents, and professional teams have created a tool to support schools to have a structured conversation with parents/carers and where appropriate the child/young person, when there are concerns a child or young person is at risk of or is experiencing EBSNA. This can be used to consider risk factors and help to identify what might be contributing to a child/young person’s emotional distress in relation to school, and the comfort they may experience by being at home.

Please find link here with further guidance in how to use this tool: [Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance \(EBSNA\) Early Identification of Needs Tool \(EINT\)](#) or find the full printable version in [Appendix 3](#).

Trafford Council Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) Early Identification of Needs Tool (EINT)

Name (pupil): _____ DOB: _____

Completed by (names and relationship to pupil): _____

Date: _____ Name of school: _____

In consultation with the parent/caregiver please go through this questionnaire and rate your levels of concern by ticking the corresponding 'level of concern' box and adding additional notes where appropriate in the notes sections.

Attendance	Level of concern				
	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Reduced or erratic attendance (please comment on patterns in notes section below)					
Expresses upset/distress to leave home in the morning					
Gets late for school					
Expresses distress/reluctance to attend certain lessons (any specific triggers and patterns that lead to avoiding partial or full days of absences please note below)					
Missing lessons/truancy					
Expresses upset/distress on return to home					
Reluctance to return to school after a school holiday or weekend					
Notes on key items					
Loss and Change	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Death of carer, parent, relative, friend					
Death of a pet					
Sudden or traumatic event, could include family member(s) experiencing job redundancy or change and financial pressures					
Sudden separation from a family member (including family member working away from home/area)					

Trafford EBSNA Early Identification of Needs Tool (EINT) Nov 2021

Gaining the views of Children and Young people

To best understand how to support the young person who is experiencing attendance difficulties, it is essential to gain their views and understand their perspective. The below tools are recommended based on other Local Authority documents and resources which have been kindly shared with Trafford.

There is **no 'one size fits all'** and tools should be selected as appropriate on a case-by-case basis. For example, ensuring accessibility for those with social communication or learning needs. Activities should be fun, creative and relaxing. Consider who is best placed to meet with the child/young person to gather their views – this may need to be an adult who knows them well, such as a member of school staff or a parent/carer.

Conversation/Consultation

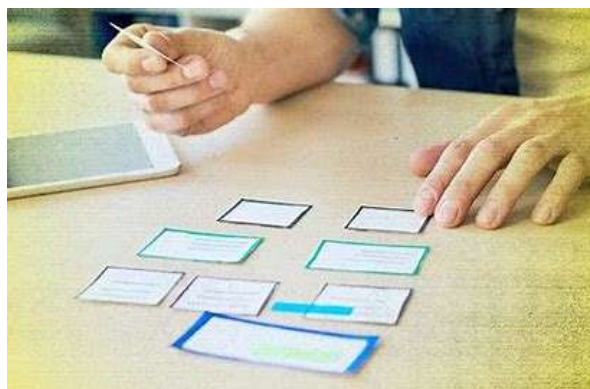
Just having a chat with the young person is a helpful way to understand their perspective. This can be used alongside some of the tools below, which could be used as conversation openers/starters with young people and/or their parents.

Identifying the function (purpose) of the non-attendance

Checklists, such as the [Trafford Early Identification of Needs Tool](#), can be used to structure discussions with the young person around what may be affecting their school attendance. Other examples can be found in the [Salford Return to School Checklist](#) and within the [West Sussex EBSA guidance](#).

Card sorts also provide a useful tool for young people to share their experiences, with reduced emphasis on having to explain or talk through their views. An example card sort, developed alongside Claire Nuttall at the University of Manchester, is included in [Appendix 4](#). Another option available is the [School Wellbeing Cards](#), developed by Dr Jerricah Holder and available to purchase online.

Other ways to structure your discussion with the young person may include completing an [Ideal School](#) activity, or developing a map or timetable of the school day to track key trigger areas or times.



2) Action Planning

It is helpful to record your discussions around supporting attendance in order to ensure agreement from all involved, consistent implementation of the agreed support and to aid review. We have developed the below template to aid this and if helpful, provide an agenda for your meeting.

Consider carefully who is best placed to facilitate the meeting and who should be in attendance. This should include the child's parents/carers and a member of staff from school who knows them well. The child themselves may also wish to join. Ensure that all attendees have a copy of the agenda ahead of the meeting and know what to expect. It is also helpful to ensure families and young people are not overwhelmed by having a large number of people attend from school. Other staff may instead wish to provide written feedback which can be shared ahead of the meeting.

Remove barriers in school and help pupils and parents to access the support they need to overcome the barriers outside of school. This might include an early help or whole family plan where absence is a symptom of wider issues.

– Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 8].

Ensure join up with pastoral support and where required, put in place additional support and adjustments, such as an individual healthcare plan and if applicable, ensuring the provision outlined in the pupil's EHCP is accessed.

- Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 9].

Action and Review Plan Templates

This action plan should be completed alongside the young person, their family members and any other key adults involved in supporting them. The review plan should be completed every 2 – 3 weeks until an improvement in wellbeing and/or attendance is achieved.

Using the information gathered using the questionnaire, card sort and/or toolkit, have a conversation and together begin to think of ideas:

Wellbeing And Attendance Initial Action Plan	
Child/young person's name:	School name:
Lead professional/staff member:	
Adults supporting this plan:	
Date of plan:	
1. What is making the young person/child feel less able to attend? <i>e.g., they are struggling with friendships after recently moving to secondary school</i>	
2. What does the child/young person like/value about school? What are the things the child/young person finds supportive/might find supportive in school? <i>e.g., they have a good relationship with their form tutor</i>	

3. What are we going to do to reduce the things making it hard for them to attend? This should include support for family members or school staff.

e.g., invite them to a lunchtime club to help them make friends and reduce time spent alone

4. What difference will this make in the next 2 – 3 weeks? Try to ensure targets are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) so that we know if the support has worked.

e.g., they will attend form time for at least two mornings per week for the next fortnight

5. When will this plan be reviewed? Ideally this should be every 2 – 3 weeks until the child's wellbeing and attendance have improved:

Date: _____ Agreed by: _____

Next meeting location, date and time: _____

3) Review

In order to assess if plans and interventions are supportive, it is essential to meet with the family and young person again at a later date (around 2 - 3 weeks) to see how things are going and to consider if plans of support need to be revised. It can be helpful to agree set timeframes to ensure these reviews take place.

It is important to acknowledge and celebrate all steps of progress, no matter how small.

Questions to consider:

- *What successes have we achieved in this cycle of support?*
- *What should we continue? How can we maintain any successes?*
- *What barriers have we faced? How can these be addressed and overcome?*
- *What new outcomes and provision do we need for the young person, school or parents/carers?*
- *Is further information gathering or referral to other services needed?*

In situations where things are feeling 'stuck' it is important to involve other professionals. Refer to our ['Who Can Help?'](#) section to view helpful services to consider.

Consider additional support from wider services and external partners, making timely referrals.

Summary table of responsibilities for school attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 9]

Wellbeing And Attendance Review Plan

Child/young person's name:

School name:

Lead professional/staff member:

Adults supporting this plan:

Date of review:

1. Previously agreed targets:

2. What progress has been made towards these targets? What progress has been made more broadly to develop the young person's wellbeing and/or attendance?

e.g., they attended one out of two form times in the last week.

3. What has worked to reduce the things making it hard for them to attend?

e.g., invite them to a lunchtime club to help them make friends and reduce time spent alone

4. Have any additional barriers to wellbeing and/or attendance been identified?

5. What support is going to be provided to the young person, their family and school staff over the next 2 – 3 weeks? This may be a continuation of previous strategies and/or a chance to trial something new.

6. What difference will this make in the next 2 – 3 weeks? Try to ensure targets are SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, and Time-Bound) so that we know if the support has worked.

e.g., they will attend form time for at least two mornings per week for the next fortnight

7. When will this plan be reviewed? Ideally this should be every 2 – 3 weeks until the child's wellbeing and attendance have improved:

Date: _____ Agreed by: _____

Next meeting location, date and time: _____

Ideas Bank

	Ideas bank
Attendance	
Reduced or erratic attendance (please comment on patterns in notes section below)	<p>Would the child/YP benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A personalised timetable to enhance attendance, which may include differentiated entry time ➤ Relaxing activity with a trusted member of staff in the mornings or on entry to school ➤ Opportunities to talk to a trusted adult and engage in relaxing activities at the end of each day ➤ A transition plan and session on the first day of each half term ➤ Detailed action plan with small steps, e.g., just putting on uniform without going to school, going for a walk with uniform on, and build upon any successes ➤ Ensure joined up pastoral care is in place where needed and consider whether a time-limited phased return to school would be appropriate, for example for those affected by anxiety about school attendance ➤ Input from Trafford Pupil Absence Team, Trafford Thrive, or the Educational Psychology Service.
Expresses upset/distress to leave home in the morning	
Late for school	
Expresses distress/reluctance to attend certain lesson (any specific triggers and patterns that lead to avoiding partial or full days of absences please note below)	
Missing lessons/truancy	
Expresses upset/distress on return to home	
Reluctance to return to school after a school holiday	
Loss and Change	
Death of carer, parent, relative, friend	<p>Would the child/YP benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Support with bereavement: https://www.winstonswish.org/supporting-you/supporting-a-bereaved-child/ or https://www.onceuponasmile.org.uk/ ➤ More regular and predictable contact with family member working away/no longer living with them ➤ A buddy system, opportunities to engage in after school activities with peers and a key adult to support them with the transition or change to friendship circle ➤ Planned quality time with parent/caregiver ➤ Therapeutic input through ELSA, school counsellor, Trafford Sunrise, CAMHS, 42nd Street, Kooth, Calm Connections, Talkshop or Trafford Thrive.
Death of a pet	
Sudden or traumatic event: could include family member(s) experiencing job redundancy or change and financial pressures.	
Sudden separation from a family member (including family member working away from home/area).	
Moving to a new house, school, key stage, area (including international new arrivals, a late start or in-year transfer into a new school)	
Came from a smaller primary school and/or outside the catchment area	
Loss of a classmate or sibling e.g., left for college/university	
Changes in after-school care	
Other	
Family Dynamic	
Carer/parents requiring advice and support	<p>Would child/YP benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Parent-school meetings/communication with a supportive staff member able to listen and advise ➤ Financial or respite support for parent/carer
Birth of a new child	
Family separation	

Family conflict including low level difficulties e.g., working through disagreements and different cultural considerations.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Planned morning routines that may better support the child/YP to come into school ➤ Support at the school gates from a trusted adult ➤ Advice to parent about how reassure child e.g., co-developing an Emotion Coaching script (please discuss with Educational Psychology if this approach is unfamiliar) ➤ A different entry time or entrance area ➤ Input/advice from parent support services: Trafford Parent Forum, Trafford STEP, First Response Team, Social Care, SENDIASS, Trafford Domestic Abuse Services, Engage Trafford, or Young Carers.
Practical problems bringing the child to school	
Child acting as a carer to family member(s) with medical, mental health and/or substance dependency needs.	
Family member(s) who have had difficult experiences of school or who have avoided school	
Anxious to leave carer/parent (separation anxiety)	
Curriculum/Learning Issues (Needs)	Ideas bank
Low levels of progress	<p>Would child/YP benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Differentiated and supported classroom learning and/or interventions (refer to the Trafford Graduated Approach for Cognition and Learning for further ideas) ➤ Pre-teaching of key vocabulary or information ➤ Effective Feedback and Growth Mind-set teaching methods, focussing of self-recognition of progress (please seek advice from your Educational Psychologist if this approach is unfamiliar) ➤ Highlighting and focus on preferred learning activities in the school timetable / reduced timetable ➤ Ensure child/YP is clear what their day will look like, e.g., what, where, when, who using visual resources such as a visual timetable ➤ Access arrangements in exams ➤ An end of day to record what has gone well and what they are looking forward to share with parents/carers ➤ Access to Homework Club or a reduction in homework demands ➤ Opportunities to explore the benefits of learning in relation to things they are motivated by e.g., a skill that will help them be able to do something for themselves/ a future job ➤ Using child/YP interests and strengths to engage them in learning ➤ An assessment of barriers to learning through school-based assessments, SENAS or Educational Psychology Service where needed. ➤ An increased level of support in school, up to and including an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP).
PE and/or games issues	
General learning difficulties e.g., literacy	
Specific subject difficulties and low confidence	
Exam or test anxiety	
Difficulties with relationships with school staff and/or particular teacher/adult.	
Negative view of school	
Problems keeping up in lessons	
Fear of failure, making mistakes and not meeting expectations	
Homework challenges	
Passive learning approach	
Social and Personal	

Has been or is being bullied and/or expresses worries about the threat of being bullied	<p>Would child/YP benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Create opportunities for the child/YP to re-establish contact with peers and key staff (in or outside of school) ➤ Ensuring key staff are available to check in with the child/YP regularly ➤ Ensuring support is not overly 'visible' to others ➤ A whole class or group intervention to support relationships e.g., Circle of Friends (please discuss with Educational Psychology if these approaches are unfamiliar) ➤ Well supported restorative opportunities to support friendships (please discuss with Educational Psychology if these approaches are unfamiliar) ➤ Opportunities to develop key social skills through activities, games and adult and peer role modelling each day ➤ Structured activity and/or access to quieter spaces at break and lunch times ➤ Supported opportunities to engage in enrichment/extra-curricular activities of interest ➤ A Speech and Language Therapy assessment ➤ Support from SENAS or the Educational Psychology Service in relation to Social Communication
Appears to have few friends/friendship issues	
Difficulties with communication and language	
Difficulties and issues with play/break times (socially isolated and or lonely)	
Fewer leisure interests in school and/or home	
Wellbeing	Ideas bank
Often appears tired or expresses feeling tired and difficulties with sleep routine.	<p>Would child/YP benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Establish strategies for removing the in-school barriers these pupils face, including considering support or reasonable adjustments for uniform, transport, routines, access to support in school and lunchtime arrangements. ➤ A School Nurse or GP appointment to rule out cause ➤ A well-planned sleep hygiene routine and/or referral to the Sleep Clinic, e.g., Sleep Tight Trafford ➤ A more accessible and enabling school context and opportunities to engage in all activities with peers ➤ Advice from Paediatrics, Occupational Therapist or SENAS regarding adjustments regarding medical condition or operation ➤ A sensory audit with appropriate advice from Occupational Therapy sheets, and advice from SENAS if needed around making sensory adjustments: https://mft.nhs.uk/app/uploads/2019/09/sensory-processing-pre-referral-advice-oct18.pdf ➤ An emotional literacy intervention to learn about feelings and stress regulation (please discuss with
Has a medical condition and or previously serious illness/operation(s)	
Sensory sensitivities and/or difficulties in specific sensory environments e.g., dislike of or distress in relation to: school uniform or touch, noisier spaces like the canteen, busy spaces and times in the school day, food and smells etc	
Low self-esteem and confidence	
Appears and expresses low mood	
Appears anxious and/or expresses feeling worried e.g., tearful, tense face and body posture, sweating, vocal/tics, complains of feeling unwell, stomach-ache etc, needs to visit the toilet frequently, continence needs. Self-soothing behaviours e.g., rocking, fiddling with objects. Rigid need for order and routine	
Keeps feelings to themselves	
Expresses negative thoughts about self, others and/or life generally	

Has emotional episodes at home and/or school	<p>42nd Street, CAMHS or Educational Psychologist where needed)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Exposure to Emotion Coaching narratives if dysregulated (please discuss with Educational Psychology if such approaches are unfamiliar) ➤ A trusted person to ‘check in with’ each day and talk to about school ➤ A toileting routine, toilet pass and/or access to a different toilet ➤ A daily routine support with an interactive visual timeline and pre-warning and support around change ➤ Daily access to sensory activities ➤ The option to eat in a classroom/access the canteen at a different time ➤ Non-verbal tools to communicate how they are feeling ➤ Safe calm spaces to access if emotionally dysregulated ➤ If an ongoing sources of distress, therapeutic input through ELSA, school counsellor, Sunrise, CAMHS, 42nd Street, Kooth, Calm Connexions, The Proud Trust, Talkshop, Young Minds, Engage Trafford ➤ A Risk Assessment wherever behaviours are high risk considered in relation to school and home situations
Other	Ideas bank
Has a diagnosis or awaiting a diagnosis/EHCP or undiagnosed needs	<p>Would child/YP benefit from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ A higher level of support in school, such as provision of mentoring, careers advice, college placements, 1-2-1 tuition or out of hours learning, or where appropriate an education, health and care plan or alternative provision. ➤ New or reviewed involvement from Educational Psychology Service ➤ Further assessment through Paediatrics, TCAS or TASC Pathway
Appears unsettled in school and/or not their first choice	
Parents	Ideas bank
Sources of support which parents/carers of the young people may find useful	<p>Trafford Family Information Service (FIS) provide free, impartial, confidential information and advice to mums, dads, carers, young people and professionals on a range of subjects. Trafford Family Information Service (FIS) Trafford Directory</p> <p>Trafford SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) provide free, confidential, impartial advice and support to parent carers, children and young people aged 0 - 25 in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) who live in Trafford. Trafford SEND Information Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS) Trafford Directory</p>

	<p>Trafford Parents Forum are a group of Trafford parents supporting Trafford parents who have children and young people with SEN, Disability and/or additional needs. Trafford Parents Forum Trafford Directory</p> <p>Trafford Stronger Together Empowering Parents (STEP): STEP are a support service within Trafford Parents Forum. We provide emotional and practical support and advice for parent/carers of children and young people with SEND in Trafford. We also have a team of trained volunteers who can act as mentors for parent carers. Trafford Directory Stronger Together Empowering Parents (STEP)</p> <p>Calm Connections: supports parents, caregivers and the whole family of children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health challenges. Trafford Directory Calm Connections</p> <p>Not Fine in School: a resource for the growing numbers of families with children experiencing school attendance barriers. https://notfineinschool.co.uk/families</p> <p>Virtual Mental Wealth Hub Trafford Directory The hub is a collaboration between stakeholders in Trafford to provide a single point of access which will link and signpost to information, advice and guidance relating to anxiety and mental health needs in Trafford.</p>
Teachers	Ideas bank
Sources of support which teachers of the young people may find useful	<p>https://www.educationsupport.org.uk/ - UK charity dedicated to supporting the mental health and wellbeing of teachers and education staff in schools, colleges, and universities.</p> <p>Virtual Mental Wealth Hub Trafford Directory The hub is a collaboration between stakeholders in Trafford to provide a single point of access which will link and signpost to information, advice and guidance relating to anxiety and mental health needs in Trafford.</p>
Advice of relevance to neurodiverse groups	
Spectrum Gaming	Spectrum Gaming is an online community for autistic young people, which focuses on building friendships, increasing self-acceptance and advocacy.

What works?

Recent research from the University of Manchester has also highlighted the successful use of these approaches in supporting children and young people to return to school following a period of anxiety (Corcoran, Bond and Knox, 2022):

Key areas identified as supportive included:

- **Effective home-school communications**, to ensure parent/carer concerns are heard and support approaches are consistent.
- **Positive relationships with school staff**, were noted as key for students who successfully returned to school.
- **Awareness of triggers**, understanding the push and pull factors to better support the young person before, throughout and after the school day.
- **Providing an individualised approach**, tailoring the intervention to the specific push and pull factors identified by the young person and those around them.
- **Engagement with other professionals**, when needed, seeking further specialist support to inform the assess, plan, do, review process.

At a whole-school level, Boaler and Bond (2023) also identified four key characteristics of effective support:

- **Proactive school systems** and ethos to support attendance,
- Building **relationships** to support well-being, engagement, and attendance,
- Targeted **intervention** matched to student needs,
- **Collaboration** and meeting the needs of the family.

It may also be useful to refer to:

Not Fine In School's summary for professionals:

<https://img1.wsimg.com/blobby/go/a41082e1-5561-438b-a6a2-16176f7570e9/downloads/NFIS%20Schools%20Summary%20Oct%202020.pdf?ver=1689264959614>

Square Pegs: Inclusivity, compassion and fitting in – a guide for schools. A useful guide for all professionals working in education and the related issues surrounding children and young people's mental health, as well as policymakers, academics and government ministers. Available to purchase from a range of online suppliers.

Can't Not Won't: A Story About A Child Who Couldn't Go To School. The book also includes written guidance for parents and professionals on what works best when it comes to managing school avoidance. Available to purchase from a range of online suppliers.

Whole School Approaches to promoting regular attendance

All schools have a continuing responsibility to proactively manage and improve attendance across their school community.

– Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 9].

Within their guidance, the Department for Education set out their expectation that schools must:

- Develop and maintain a whole school culture that promotes the benefits of high attendance.
- Have a clear school attendance policy which all leaders, staff, pupils, and parents understand.
- Accurately complete admission and attendance registers and have effective day to day processes in place to follow-up absence.
- Regularly analyse attendance and absence data to identify pupils or cohorts that require support with their attendance and put effective strategies in place.
- Build strong relationships with families, listen to and understand barriers to attendance and work with families to remove them.
- Share information and work collaboratively with other schools in the area, local authorities and other partners when absence is at risk of becoming persistent or severe.

– Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 9].

It is therefore essential to have a consistent whole school approach, to ensure early identification and intervention for pupils at risk of and/or experiencing school attendance difficulties.

Improving attendance requires knowledge of guidance and regulations but also expertise in working with families to remove barriers to attendance and safeguard pupils. Just as those barriers are regularly evolving, so too is the training that school staff require to address them. All trusts and governing bodies should therefore ensure that training on attendance is included in the school(s)' continued professional development offer for all staff, and that attendance is covered in any trust/federation wide induction packs.

– Working Together to Improve Attendance (DfE, 2022) [Page 23 – 24].

The DfE have produced a number of useful good practice [webinars and training sessions](#), provided by several schools and multi academy trusts which address school absence issues and support.

Whole school training on school attendance difficulties and Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance is available from [Trafford Educational Psychology Service](#), including training on how to use these materials in your setting. Please contact your EP if you would like to find out more.

There are also a range of workbooks and materials available to support in school intervention, including:

Understanding & Supporting Children & Young People with Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) – Tina Rae. *A practical user-friendly toolkit of resources providing an overview of EBSA and strategies to support return to school, with a focus on transition from primary to secondary school and the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic.*

[EBSA Horizons Online CPD Course](#) - *A comprehensive CPD course on Emotional Based School Avoidance by specialist EP, Dr Jerricah Holder, which develops our understanding and skills to support children and young people experiencing difficulties attending school.*

Emotionally Based School Avoidance, [Whole School Audit tool](#) - West Sussex Educational Psychology Service. *A useful checklist which can be completed to review, plan and implement whole school systems for promotion of emotional well-being and prevention of EBSA.*

Emotionally Based School Avoidance, [Whole School Audit tool](#) - Lancashire Educational Psychology Service. *A useful checklist which can be completed to review, plan and implement whole school systems for promotion of emotional well-being and prevention of EBSA.*

[Anxiety](#) - Paul Stallard, *Printable examples of activities that can be completed with children and young people to support their emotional literacy and wellbeing in school.*

[Promoting Emotional Resilience](#), a resource pack produced by West Sussex County Council to support direct work with children and young people.

[Addressing emotionally-based school avoidance \(annafreud.org\)](#), a guide for school leaders, senior mental health leads, and classroom teachers.

Who can help?

In situations where 'stuck' it is important to involve other professionals. Helpful services to consider may include:

Trafford Educational Psychology Service

The **Educational Psychology Service** is here to support children and young people experiencing anxieties about school or Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) and can also offer a whole school training package around this subject. School SENCOs are able to request this support at termly Planning Meetings with the consent of the child/young person's parents/carers. Educational Psychologists can support indirectly by supporting schools to implement the Graduated Approach as described in this document and wherever needed through direct involvement. Educational Psychologists can support by helping to establish a shared understanding of a child's/young person's needs through direct work with the child/young person and consultation with schools, families and other relevant professionals.

We recognise that children and young people experiencing EBSNA may find it difficult to interact with unfamiliar adults and in such circumstances, we are happy to work in creative ways through the adults that the child/young person trusts (often a parent/carer or key person in school). This work can provide a foundation for informed interventions/support systems which are agreed and implemented by schools to support the child/young person to feel 'emotionally safe' in the school environment and achieve better attendance. This support is often reviewed and refined over time to ensure progress is being made. Where there is evidence that a child/young person has a high level of need and may benefit from a more enhanced level of support or a different type of provision, an Educational Psychologist may also be asked to provide Advice to the Local Authority following a request for Education, Health Care Plan (EHCP) assessment. This usually takes place when an Educational Psychologist is already involved.

Trafford Pupil Absence Team

The Pupil Absence Team is part of the Education of Vulnerable Children Service. We provide attendance advice and guidance to all schools by offering Targeting Support meetings, analysing key attendance data, advising on the content of Individual Attendance Plans, when to use a parenting contract, and on signposting to other agencies.

We also provide statutory advice to all schools on Parental Responsibility Measures for non-attendance which include the issue of Penalty Notices, prosecutions in the Magistrates' courts and Education Supervision Orders. We monitor and follow up cases of Children Missing from Education and collect and analyse data for children on a school roll who are at risk of missing education (CARME).

Trafford's Special Educational Needs Advisory Service (SENAS)

Trafford's Special Educational Needs Advisory Service (SENAS) can provide support to schools for children who are experiencing or at risk of EBSNA. We provide support to schools for children and young people (CYP) who have social communication needs (including autism), physical/medical needs or learning needs including specific learning difficulties (such as dyslexia). We know that many children with these and other needs may find it difficult to attend school for a number of reasons. We are particularly aware that a number of CYP (especially those who are autistic) may mask or camouflage the difficulties they are experiencing, appearing fine in school and releasing their true feelings at home. We provide support to schools to put appropriate support into place for both CYP's learning and their social times in school which can help to reduce school anxiety, including when the anxiety is not apparent in school.

Schools can request our support through a Single Agency Referral Form (SARF) on Liquid Logic, Trafford council's secure system.

Trafford Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (SENDIASS)

We offer free, confidential, impartial advice and support for parent carers, children and young people aged 0-25 in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) who live in Trafford.

We have a dedicated website offering information and advice and our social media pages provide information regarding both local and national services and events.

We offer a 24- hour voicemail service on 0161 912 3150. We can also be contacted at sendiass@trafford.gov.uk or via the contact form on our website at <https://sendiass.trafford.gov.uk>.

Trafford Thrive in Education

Trafford Thrive in Education is an early intervention mental health support team working in Trafford, with young people experiencing low mood, anxiety, and behavioural difficulties including emotionally based school non-attendance. We consist of two partner organisations - Place2Be are based in primary schools and MHST (Mental Health Support Team) are based in secondary schools. We are currently based in 34 Trafford schools.

School Senior Mental Health Leads can consult with the team about young people they feel may be appropriate for referral. All referrals are made with consent from the young person and their carers.

Thrive in Education can support young people, their families, and schools, through advice and consultation, offering group support and workshops or by directly working with the young person or their parent on a 1: 1 basis. We also support schools in developing their Whole school Approach to mental health and emotional wellbeing. We are committed to supporting young people in ways that are most meaningful to them.

Trafford Virtual School

The Virtual School is a statutory service that is in place in every council in England to promote the education of looked after children, previously looked after children and children in need (children who have ever had a social worker). The golden thread that runs through Virtual School, whoever we are supporting, is that education is a huge protective factor for our children, offering life changing opportunities. But education doesn't have to just be about what happens in classrooms and what starts at 9am and ends at 3:30. It's about supporting our children to find a sense of identity, to find what interests them and what they might want to do when they grow up. It's about keeping high expectations and nurturing high aspirations even when things are toughest.

Looked after children - We oversee the education of all of the Trafford looked after children. We have an online register so that we can keep track of the children's attendance, see who is not in school and put support in where it's needed. We manage a team of teachers, educational psychologists, careers advisers and a Speech and Language Therapist among others so we can respond quickly to children's needs and support their schools to ensure they get the best education possible. This includes completing termly Personal Education Plan (PEP) meetings with schools, social workers, children and families to discuss any barriers they might face in education and come up with strategies to maximise their achievements. Trafford Council is 'Corporate Parent' to these children as we often share parental responsibility, and we have a duty to ensure that we champion their education in the same way as any parent would.

Previously looked after children - We offer information and advice to families and schools who are supporting previously looked after children – that's children who were adopted from care or made subject to Special Guardianship Orders or Child Arrangement Orders.

Children in Need - In June 2021 the DfE announced that the role of Virtual Schools would be expanded further to include a strategic leadership role in terms of overseeing the education of 'Children in Need'. We are looking at data around Children in Need so that we can promote policy and strategy within the Local Authority and schools in improve outcomes in education.

Specialist Education Practitioner on First Response:

The role of Specialist Educational Practitioner is a point of contact in Trafford Children's First Response who can offer educational advice, guidance and support to referrers, families, educational settings, other professionals and agencies and as well as staff on First Response.

Through a First Response referral or contact the role may then include liaising with schools, parents and carers about EBSNA, talking about barriers, discussing the graduated approach and the screening toolkit and signposting to appropriate support and services.

Spectrum Gaming

Spectrum Gaming is an online community for autistic young people which has three main intended outcomes:

1) Building Friendships - A lot of autistic young people are lonely, isolated and struggle with friendships. We wanted to create a community where autistic young people feel comfortable and can make strong friendships in a safe way. Our main provision is our online community, that anyone from across the UK can access. We also run meet ups for young people who live in the Greater Manchester area.

2) Increasing Self-Acceptance - Because of how much people misunderstand autism and the way it is diagnosed, unfortunately many autistic people hate their diagnosis or feel ashamed of being autistic. We want to make sure as many autistic people as possible are able to accept their differences and live the happiest lives they can

3) Advocacy - We don't just want to be a community that enables autistic young people to develop meaningful friendships and develop a more positive perspective of autism. We want to create a movement that will have a positive influence on society through advocacy and enable strategical change to ensure the needs of autistic young people are met across the UK. We have created a platform where young people can share their voices through content, talks and more. You can see some examples of content we produce on [our YouTube channel](#).

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

Schools

How should this type of absence be coded?

The absence should be authorised if school is satisfied that the reasons given are genuine and should therefore be coded I (illness) in the school register. [DfE guidance](#) is clear that schools should authorise absence due to both physical and mental health related illness.

What support is available to schools?

Alongside this guidance document, additional guidance and support is available from a number of teams across the Local Authority. Please refer to the [Who Can Help](#) section of this guidance to identify which team would be best to contact.

Whole school training on Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance is available from Trafford Educational Psychology Service.

What does the law say?

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school.

Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Refer to the [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) guidance, the [mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) and **Trafford Pupil Attendance Team** for further information and support.

Should we send work home for children who are too anxious to attend?

Many children and young people share that fear of falling behind or not being able to keep up in lessons makes it harder for them to attend or return to school. This difficulty may then be worsened by a period of absence, as the child falls further behind and experiences increasing anxiety about returning to their lessons. By allowing the child to complete work from home, you can reduce their fears about returning to lessons, maintain a positive sense of connection with school staff, and minimise the impact on their attainment and progress. Where possible, marking or providing feedback on the child's work will support them to maintain this connection with their teachers.

This is in line with recent DfE guidance, which states "In exceptional cases, a child might also be unable to attend for medical reasons but well enough to learn from home. In these circumstances, a school may consider providing remote education, allowing children to keep on track with their education and stay connected to their teachers and friends..."

...When a child cannot attend school but is well enough to learn, their school should always seek to overcome the barriers to attendance and provide support for the pupil to attend before offering remote education. It is important that remote education is only considered as a last resort and a short-term solution as part of a plan to reintegrate back to school...

...It's the school's responsibility to make sure that any work provided during periods of remote education is high quality, ambitious, and covers an appropriate range of subjects. Schools should aim for remote work to be equivalent in length to the core teaching time they would receive in school. However, this is not always possible and a child's age, home environment and learning needs should be considered."

Refer to the DfE's [blog post](#) and [guidance](#) for further information.

Can part-time timetables be used for children who are anxious about attending school?

The following answer has been taken from the DfE's [mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#).

The [Working together to improve school attendance](#) guidance sets out the principles of part-time timetables. A part-time timetable might refer to an agreed period of time where the child is allowed to be away from school for part of the school week. All children of compulsory school age are entitled by law to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of all parents/carers to ensure their child receives that education by full-time attendance at school or otherwise.

In very exceptional circumstances, however, where it is in a pupil's best interests, a plan to help a child to attend well may involve the use of a temporary part-time timetable to meet their individual needs. For example, where a medical condition (including a mental health condition) prevents a pupil from attending school full-time and a part-time timetable is considered as part of a re-integration package.

A medical condition might include a mental health condition, however schools should keep in mind the nature of the challenge, and whether it can instead be managed by implementing reasonable adjustments to support attendance, as outlined above.

Any part-time timetable should seek to maximise face-to-face school time as much as possible. Schools should consider providing remote education to help pupils stay on track with the education they would normally receive. Any remote education should only be considered if the pupil is well enough and able to learn and should be given in line with the guidance providing remote education: [guidance for schools](#).

Any part-time timetable arrangements should be designed with the specific barrier to attendance in mind, have a time limit by which point the pupil is expected to attend full-time, (either at school or at an alternative provision setting), and have formal arrangements in place for regularly reviewing the timetable with the pupil and their parents/carers.

The effective practice examples demonstrate how utilisation of a temporary part-time timetable can help to improve a pupil's attendance over time. In agreeing to a part-time timetable, the school, parents/carers and pupil have agreed to the pupil being absent from school for part of the week or day, and therefore must treat absence as "absence with leave" (a type of authorised absence). A part-time timetable must not be used to manage a pupil's behaviour. Guidance and further support with managing mental health and pupil behaviour is also available.

A part-time timetable may also refer to full attendance at school, but with different arrangements for the attendance of lessons. This is also a valid option and example of a reasonable adjustment (see the effective practice examples for more detail). We would encourage school staff to consider the same principles outlined in this section for this type of arrangement (i.e., for it to be regularly reviewed, agreed by all parties, building back up to full time spent in classes, etc.).

Refer to the [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) guidance, the [mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) and **Trafford Pupil Attendance Team** for further information and support.

When should schools take legal action to support regular attendance?

Successfully treating the root causes of absence and removing barriers to attendance, at home, in school or more broadly requires schools and local partners to work collaboratively with, not against families. In line with the [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) guidance, legal action should be used as a last resort. Their guidance states:

Where absence persists and voluntary support is not working or not being engaged with, partners should work together to explain the consequences clearly and ensure support is also in place to enable families to respond. Depending on the circumstances this may include formalising support through a parenting contract or education supervision order.

Where all other avenues have been exhausted and support is not working or not being engaged with, enforce attendance through statutory intervention or prosecution to protect the pupil's right to an education. [Page 8]

Refer to the [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) guidance, the [mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) and **Trafford Pupil Attendance Team** for further information and support.

When should we apply for an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP)?

Education, Health and Care Plans (EHCPs) are for children and young people who have a special educational need or disability that cannot be met by the support that is available at their school or college setting. Most children and young people with special educational needs will have help given to them without the need for an EHC Plan at the SEN support level.

In some cases, children who display EBSNA behaviours may have underlying special educational needs and require support above the SEN support level. If this is the case schools or parent can request that the Local Authority undertake an Education Health Care needs assessment.

In order to be able to decide whether an assessment should occur the Local Authority will need to see evidence that the school or college have taken appropriate action following the assess, plan, do and review cycle and there is evidence that the child or young person has not made adequate progress or has only made progress because of a very high level of support.

Families

What can I do to help at home?

Alongside engaging with school-based support, the most important thing is to continue to be there for your child and to provide nurture and reassurance at home. Children often report that family members are some of the few adults that they feel listen to them, so continuing to be present for your child and listening to their worries about school will be a big support.

It may also be helpful to link up with families experiencing similar difficulties. The following organisations are working across Trafford:

- **Trafford Parents Forum:** we support and work with parent carers and families of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) with or without a diagnosis across all areas of disability and disability across Trafford.
<https://www.traffordparentsforum.com/>
- **Trafford Stronger Together Empowering Parents (STEP):** STEP are a support service within Trafford Parents Forum. We provide emotional and practical support and advice for parent/carers of children and young people with SEND in Trafford. We also have a team of trained volunteers who can act as mentors for parent carers.
<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/service.page?id=ZhVo9t8DDmU>
- **Trafford Special Educational Needs and Disability Information, Advice and Support Service (Trafford SENDIASS):** provides impartial information, advice and support to children and young people with SEND, as well as their parents and carers.
<https://sendiass.trafford.gov.uk/Home.aspx>
- **Trafford Family Information Service (FIS)** provide free, impartial, confidential information and advice to mums, dads, carers, young people and professionals on a range of subjects.
<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/service.page?id=IF414N9vuKU>
- **Calm Connections:** supports parents, caregivers and the whole family of children and young people with emotional wellbeing and mental health challenges.
<https://www.trafforddirectory.co.uk/kb5/trafford/fsd/service.page?id=dF5YX4tPx04>
- **Not Fine in School:** a resource for the growing numbers of families with children experiencing school attendance barriers. <https://notfineinschool.co.uk/families>

Further guidance around parental support for anxiety can be found at the following websites:

<https://www.nhs.uk/mental-health/children-and-young-adults/advice-for-parents/anxiety-in-children/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/parents-a-z-mental-health-guide/anxiety/>

What does the law say for parents and carers?

The law entitles every child of compulsory school age to an efficient, full-time education suitable to their age, aptitude, and any special educational need they may have. It is the legal responsibility of every parent to make sure their child receives that education either by attendance at a school or by education otherwise than at a school. Where parents decide to have their child registered at school, they have an additional legal duty to ensure their child attends that school regularly. This means their child must attend every day that the school is open, except in a small number of allowable circumstances such as being too ill to attend or being given permission for an absence in advance from the school.

Parents are expected to work with the school and local authority to help them understand their child's barriers to attendance. This includes proactively engaging with the support offered to prevent the need for more formal support.

For further advice, contact [Trafford SENDIASS](#). They provide free, confidential, impartial advice and support to parent carers, children and young people aged 0-25 in relation to Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) who live in Trafford.

Refer to the [Working Together to Improve Attendance](#) guidance, the [mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools](#) and **Trafford Pupil Attendance Team** for further information and support.

Children and Young People

How common are school attendance difficulties?

Recent research suggests that between 3 – 5% of children and young people experience this type of difficulty at some point in their education. That's around one child in each class!

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is the feeling you get when you're worried or scared about something. Some anxiety can be helpful as it can keep you safe from danger. But sometimes anxiety can make you feel like things are worse than they actually are and can feel overwhelming.

Just like adults, children and young people feel worried and anxious at times. Children can feel anxious about different things at different ages. Many of these worries are a normal part of growing up.

Anxiety becomes a problem for children when it starts to get in the way of their everyday life. For example, if you go into any school at exam time, many of the children will be anxious, but some may be so anxious that they do not manage to get to school that morning.

What can I do?

- Challenging your worries is helpful – think about how likely the worry is to happen. What might you say to someone else who's experiencing this worry?
- Find positive activities you enjoy and plan these into your week or try to think about something you're looking forward to in the future
- Do physical exercise, learn mindfulness or yoga
- If you are still worried, talk to someone you can trust at home or in school

The following websites also have lots of helpful resources to further understand anxiety and how to take care of yourself.

- <https://www.childline.org.uk/info-advice/your-feelings/anxiety-stress-panic/anxiety/>
- <https://www.healthforteens.co.uk/feelings/anxiety/>
- <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/young-person/mental-health-conditions/anxiety>

Appendix 1: Primary Case Study – Preeya (Year 3)

Preeya's mother has approached you as she is worried about Preeya. You have a good relationship with Preeya's mother as you supported her when Preeya's older brother Asif became ill with Leukaemia. You often visited him at home and dropped homework activities off for him to complete. Asif is now at Secondary school, and you often chat with mum about how he is doing. The family are very protective of him.

Preeya's mother says that after school Preeya will often come home and run up to her bedroom, often telling her siblings to leave her alone. This is new behaviour; she does not want to talk about her school day and will not explain what's wrong. Preeya can be reluctant to get out of bed in the morning, complain of tummy aches and will argue with her twin brothers who have just started at the Infant school. By contrast Preeya's mother has noticed that Preeya seems happier at the weekends, she gets up early and enjoys spending time with her dad, helping him to set up their shop. Preeya's started working shifts last year and as such Preeya is dropped off or collected by her grandma or father, and this routine can be changeable.

Attendance records indicate that since transitioning to the Juniors Preeya has had a few of sick days and she is late for school, most often on a Thursday and Friday. When Preeya has been off school due to tummy aches, Preeya's mother says she will often follow her father around the house, and they will often prepare the evening meal together.

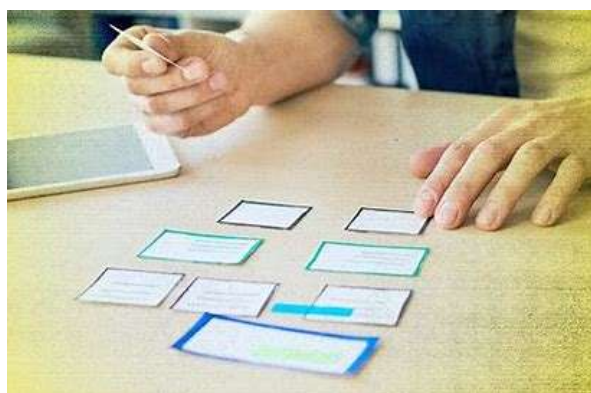
Preeya is taught by two teachers. She has Miss Connor for the first half of the week, and Mr Hall for the second half of the week. Whilst both teachers do not feel Preeya is displaying obviously anxious behaviours in school, Mr Hall has noticed that she appears tired and less engaged in the afternoons, often saying she 'doesn't know' and looking down when asked questions during whole class discussions. This happens even when Preeya has a good understanding of the subject being discussed. In terms of learning, both of the teachers feel Preeya is struggling with literacy but feel she is doing well in other areas of the curriculum. Preeya is a creative child who enjoys art and some of the children in her class have suggested that they should set up more drawing activity in the Breakfast Club.

At playtimes Preeya will readily go on to the playground with her friend Mia, and they are often observed laughing and chatting together. Preeya does not tend to interact with other children in class except for Mia, however one of the children has complained that Mia is being mean to them, and you have had to speak with Mia about this. At lunchtimes Preeya will often hang back in the classroom and sometimes Preeya will ask Miss Connor if she can eat her lunch with Billy and Tim who are currently allowed to eat in the classroom because of their sensory sensitivities to the noise and smells in the lunch hall.

In the Infant school, Preeya's mother says Preeya would often talk fondly about her favourite TA who now works in the Reception class, but she does not talk about any of the teachers in the Junior school. Preeya will always volunteer to go over to the Infant school to pass on a message for the Head Teacher and she seems to like to have this responsibility.

Preeya finds it difficult to articulate what might be contributing to her feelings about school, but she has been able to complete the [card sort](#) with you:

Like me	Not like me
<p>I find it difficult to leave the house in the morning.</p> <p>My life at home has changed or is different to how it used to be.</p> <p>My life at school has changed or is different to how it used to be.</p> <p>I worry about my parent/carer during the day.</p> <p>My sibling doesn't/didn't go to school.</p> <p>I find some lessons difficult.</p> <p>I worry about 'getting it wrong' in lessons or not meeting my targets.</p> <p>Other people are unkind or bully people in school.</p> <p>I sometimes feel like I don't fit in at school.</p> <p>I feel poorly or unwell at school.</p> <p>I find the school environment overwhelming.</p> <p>I am happier when I am at home.</p>	<p>The journey to/from school is difficult.</p> <p>I have been out of school too long to go back.</p> <p>My family/carers do not want me to go to school.</p> <p>I don't like my lessons.</p> <p>I don't see the point in going to school.</p> <p>I don't have people to talk to or spend time with at school.</p> <p>I feel tired at school.</p> <p>Going to school makes me feel bad/worried about myself.</p> <p>I am not listened to/believed when I talk about my feelings.</p> <p>I do not have the right equipment for school.</p> <p>I do activities that I enjoy at home.</p>



Through discussion with Preeya's mother, information from teachers and a consideration of Preeya's views you are able to complete the [Early Identification of Needs Tool](#):

Trafford Council Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) Early Identification of Needs Tool (EINT)

Name (pupil): Preeya Sundar-Walker

Year Group: 3

Completed by: Mrs Jackson (Learning Mentor), Kanta Sundar (mum), Miss Connor and Mr Hall (Class Teachers)

Date: 26.01.21

Name of school: Forest Mount Juniors

In consultation with the parent/caregiver please go through this questionnaire and rate your levels of concern by ticking the corresponding 'level of concern' box and adding additional notes where appropriate in the notes sections.

Level of concern					
Attendance	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Reduced or erratic attendance (please comment on patterns in notes section below)	✓				
Expresses upset/distress to leave home in the morning	✓				
Late for school	✓				
Expresses distress/reluctance to attend certain lesson (any specific triggers and patterns that lead to avoiding partial or full days of absences please note below)	✓				
Missing lessons/truancy				✓	
Expresses upset/distress on return to home	✓				
Reluctance to return to school after a school holiday or weekend	✓				
Notes on key items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Late on Thurs/Fridays Mr Hall's days - Happier weekends, enjoys time with dad in shop 					
Loss and Change	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Death of carer, parent, relative, friend				✓	
Death of a pet				✓	
Sudden or traumatic event: could include family member(s) experiencing job redundancy or change and financial pressures.	(See below)				
Sudden separation from a family member (including family member working away from home/area).				✓	

Moving to a new house, school, Key Stage, area (including international new arrivals), a late start or in-year transfer into a new school		✓			
Came from a smaller primary school and/or outside the catchment area				✓	
Loss of a classmate or sibling e.g., left for college/university				✓	
Changes in after-school care		✓			
Other		✓			
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Asif has had serious illness and family have needed to look after him and give him lots of attention. He is now back in school - Pick up routines have changed/are changeable and Preeya is now coming to school with the twins in the mornings - Recent transition from KS1/Infants, missing Ms Fletcher (Infants) 					
Family Dynamic	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Carer/parent requiring advice and support/finding things hard		✓			
Birth of a new child impacting relations and/or routine		✓			
Family separation					
Family conflict including low level difficulties e.g., working through disagreements and/or different cultural considerations			✓		
Practical problems bringing the child to school and/or problems travelling to school for young person					
Child acting as a carer to family member(s) with medical, mental health and/or substance dependency needs.				✓	
Family member(s) who have had difficult experiences of school or who have avoided school	? (See comment below)				
Anxious to leave carer/parent (separation anxiety)		✓			
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Brother home schooled previously, but did not avoid school - Change in pick up routines due to mum's work - Little brothers just started at the Infants- start of day has changed - Following dad a lot at home 					
Curriculum/Learning Needs	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Low levels of progress				✓	
PE and/or games issues				✓	
General learning needs				✓	
Specific subject difficulties and low confidence		Literacy			
Exam or test anxiety					✓

Difficulties with relationships with school staff and/or particular teacher/adult.		✓			
Negative view of school					
Problems keeping up in lessons					✓
Fear of failure, making mistakes and not meeting expectations		✓			
Homework challenges				✓	
Passive learning approach		✓			
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seems less confident in speaking in class- says 'don't know' often - Literacy needs- Candidate for Toe by Toe? - Dislikes literacy and PE (although enjoys Sports Days on the field), but likes other subjects - More reluctant to attend on days when Mr Hall teachers 					
Social and Personal	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Has been or is being bullied and/or expresses worries about the threat of being bullied					✓
Appears to have few friends/friendships		✓			
Difficulties with communication and language		✓			
Difficulties and issues with play/break times (conflict, socially isolated and/ or on own)		✓			
Fewer leisure interests in school and/or home					✓
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seems less confident in speaking in class - Some issues in social circle that may need support - Likes art/creative activity, cooking and being in the shop with dad, likes going on errands to the Infants/seeing Ms Fletcher 					
Wellbeing	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Often appears tired or expresses feeling tired and difficulties with sleep routine		✓			
Has a medical condition and or previously serious illness/operation(s)				✓	
Low self-esteem and confidence		✓			
Appears and expresses low mood					
Appears anxious and/or expresses feeling worried e.g., tearful, tense face and body posture, sweating, vocal/tics, complains of feeling unwell, stomach-ache etc., needs to visit the toilet frequently, continence needs, self-soothing behaviours e.g., rocking, fiddling with objects, rigid need for order and routine	✓				
Keeps feelings to themselves	✓				

Expresses negative thoughts about self, others and/or life generally				✓	
Has emotional episodes at home and/or school	✓				
Notes on key items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In the afternoon is tired - Not speaking up in class in afternoons - No able to verbalise what is upsetting her 					
Other	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Has sensory sensitivities e.g., in response to noisier/crowded times in school such as smells and tastes in the lunch hall etc. Please see here for a broader understanding of a child/young person's sensory needs: sensory-processing-pre-referral-advice-oct18.pdf (mft.nhs.uk)		✓			
Has a diagnosis or awaiting a diagnosis/EHCP or undiagnosed needs				✓	
Appears unsettled in school and/or not their first choice of school				✓	
Complex needs e.g., special educational needs effecting capacity to attend school and anxiety when in school (can be hidden anxiety) including those relating to physical and medical needs e.g., displays reluctance or some discomfort with aspects of moving and handling etc.				✓	
Notes on key items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seems to prefer quiet space of classroom for lunch, dislikes noise 					

Together you reflect on the push/pull factors and begin to think of ideas:

<p>What are the things that are leading Preeya to feel less comfortable in school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Thurs/Fridays - Relationship with Mr Hall - Noise - Literacy/PE - Having to speak in class - Difficulties in peer group circle - Uncertainty over pickup/drop off routines 	<p>Why might Preeya feel more comforted at home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Special time with dad - Knowing Asif was able to learn at home
<p>What does Preeya like/value about school? What are the things that Preeya finds supportive/may find supportive?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiences with Mia - Extending Preeya’s social circle through social group/structured activity on playground - PSHE project on friendships skills/being a good friend - Literacy: Assess if any need for greater differentiation/targeted support help to build skills and confidence - Partner work to support contributions in class <p>Having a timetable that support Preeya to e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - See Ms Fletcher on Thurs and Fridays and/or building Preeya’s relationship with new staff (Mr Hall) through special time together (jobs/responsibilities) - Option to routinely eating in classroom (rather than hall) - Breakfast club- Art/creative activity in mornings - Knowing pick up routines via personalised visual timetable to support the above - Check noise levels in PE to see if adjustments can be made and talking to Preeya about what type of PE lessons she does enjoy 	<p>What might help Preeya to be more able to transition to school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Clear parental explanation of why her brother needed to stay off school and why he now needs to attend - Ensuring that special time activities with dad routinely take place after school/at the weekend (could be built into a weekly routine and planned with Preeya in advance?) - Calmer morning routines via parental use of Emotion Coaching script, trialing ear defenders in mornings, opportunity to walk to school with Mia? - Consider with Preeya communications tools in school to enable Preeya to signal to her teacher how she is feeling/with agreements of how she will be supported at these times

Appendix 2: Secondary Case Study – Aiden (Year 8)

Aiden's mother has approached you as she is worried about Aiden. You were made aware of Aiden's previous attendance difficulties when he transitioned from his primary school in Year 7, and it was reported that he was often late to school and his attendance frequently dropped below 90%, resulting in his family receiving multiple warning letters from the Local Authority. Aiden had access to a teaching assistant in his Year 6 class who he often spoke to throughout the day. Aiden currently travels by tram to school, as his parents both have to be in work by 9am. In primary school they were able to drop him off as there was a free breakfast club available from 8am.

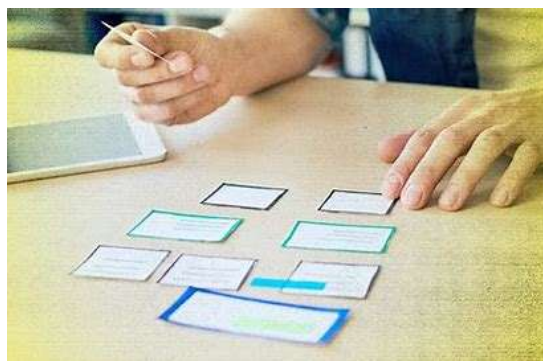
Aiden's mother says that he often complains of nausea or headaches in the morning and has become quieter and more withdrawn at home. His attendance at school is around 85%, though he is often late and misses morning registration. You have had limited contact with his family over this year, though his form tutor has told you that he has noticed a similar pattern of emotions in the morning, but Aiden usually looks fine to him by the afternoon form.

In terms of learning, Aiden has always worked hard and achieved ARE in his end of KS2 assessments. He has become more reluctant to engage in learning activities over this term, and often does not return homework or these are done to a low standard. Aiden's teachers are aware that he is struggling in class but say that he does not raise his hand or ask for help. On a couple of occasions this term you have found him on the corridors during lesson time or hiding in the toilet.

At breaktimes Aiden will readily go on to the field with his friend Josh, and they are often observed laughing and chatting together. Aiden does not tend to interact with other children in class except for Josh and has previously reported to staff that other children pick on them. On one occasion Aiden retaliated physically, resulting in a fixed term exclusion. When Josh is absent, Aiden will often hang back in the classroom and sometimes Aiden will ask Miss Connor if he can eat his lunch with Billy and Tim who are currently allowed to eat in the classroom because of their sensory sensitivities to the noise and smells in the lunch hall.

Aiden finds it difficult to articulate what might be contributing to his feelings about school, but he has been able to complete the [card sort](#) with you:

Like me	Not like me
<p>I find it difficult to leave the house in the morning.</p> <p>I don't like my lessons.</p> <p>I don't see the point in going to school.</p> <p>I don't have people to talk to or spend time with at school.</p> <p>I feel tired at school.</p> <p>Going to school makes me feel bad/worried about myself.</p> <p>I am not listened to/believed when I talk about my feelings.</p> <p>My life at school has changed or is different to how it used to be.</p> <p>I worry about 'getting it wrong' in lessons or not meeting my targets.</p> <p>Other people are unkind or bully people in school.</p> <p>I sometimes feel like I don't fit in at school.</p> <p>I feel poorly or unwell at school.</p> <p>I find the school environment overwhelming.</p> <p>I am happier when I am at home.</p>	<p>The journey to/from school is difficult.</p> <p>I have been out of school too long to go back.</p> <p>My family/carers do not want me to go to school.</p> <p>I do not have the right equipment for school.</p> <p>I do activities that I enjoy at home.</p> <p>My life at home has changed or is different to how it used to be.</p> <p>I worry about my parent/carer during the day.</p> <p>My sibling doesn't/didn't go to school.</p> <p>I find some lessons difficult.</p>



Through discussion with Aiden’s parents, information from teachers and a consideration of Aiden’s views you are able to complete the [Early Identification of Needs Tool](#):

Trafford Council Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) Early Identification of Needs Tool (EINT)

Name (pupil): Aiden Keegan

Year Group: 8

Completed by: Mrs Oswald (SENCo), Ms Keegan (mum), Miss Haywood (Head of Year 8)

Date: 26.01.21

Name of school: Forest Mount High School

In consultation with the parent/caregiver please go through this questionnaire and rate your levels of concern by ticking the corresponding ‘level of concern’ box and adding additional notes where appropriate in the notes sections.

Level of concern					
Attendance	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Reduced or erratic attendance (please comment on patterns in notes section below)	✓				
Expresses upset/distress to leave home in the morning	✓				
Late for school	✓				
Expresses distress/reluctance to attend certain lesson (any specific triggers and patterns that lead to avoiding partial or full days of absences please note below)			✓		
Missing lessons/truancy		✓			
Expresses upset/distress on return to home			✓		
Reluctance to return to school after a school holiday or weekend		✓			
Notes on key items					
✓ Often misses morning registration due to difficulties getting ready					
Loss and Change	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Death of carer, parent, relative, friend				✓	
Death of a pet				✓	
Sudden or traumatic event: could include family member(s) experiencing job redundancy or change and financial pressures.				✓	
Sudden separation from a family member (including family member working away from home/area).				✓	
Moving to a new house, school, Key Stage, area (including international new		✓			

arrivals), a late start or in-year transfer into a new school					
Came from a smaller primary school and/or outside the catchment area	✓				
Loss of a classmate or sibling e.g., left for college/university		✓			
Changes in after-school care				✓	
Other				✓	
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Recent transition from Primary School. Aiden is one of only three pupils from his primary school who have moved to Forest Mount High. 					
Family Dynamic	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Carer/parent requiring advice and support/finding things hard		✓			
Birth of a new child impacting relations and/or routine				✓	
Family separation		✓			
Family conflict including low level difficulties e.g., working through disagreements and/or different cultural considerations			✓		
Practical problems bringing the child to school and/or problems travelling to school for young person	✓				
Child acting as a carer to family member(s) with medical, mental health and/or substance dependency needs.				✓	
Family member(s) who have had difficult experiences of school or who have avoided school				✓	
Anxious to leave carer/parent (separation anxiety)		✓			
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Aiden dislikes getting the tram as he reports it is 'very busy', 'smelly' and the other children pick on him. - Aiden's parents report feeling very anxious about his attendance as they feel at risk of fines or legal action. 					
Curriculum/Learning Needs	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Low levels of progress		✓			
PE and/or games issues		✓			
General learning needs			✓		
Specific subject difficulties and low confidence	✓				
Exam or test anxiety	✓				
Difficulties with relationships with school staff and/or particular teacher/adult.			✓		
Negative view of school		✓			
Problems keeping up in lessons		✓			
Fear of failure, making mistakes and not meeting expectations		✓			

Homework challenges			✓		
Passive learning approach		✓			
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seems less confident in speaking in class- says 'don't know' often - Dislikes literacy and PE (although enjoys Sports Days on the field), but likes other subjects 					
Social and Personal	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Has been or is being bullied and/or expresses worries about the threat of being bullied	✓				
Appears to have few friends/friendships		✓			
Difficulties with communication and language		✓			
Difficulties and issues with play/break times (conflict, socially isolated and/ or on own)		✓			
Fewer leisure interests in school and/or home					✓
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Seems less confident in speaking in class - Some issues in social circle that may need support, particularly struggles when Josh is absent. 					
Wellbeing	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Often appears tired or expresses feeling tired and difficulties with sleep routine			✓		
Has a medical condition and or previously serious illness/operation(s)				✓	
Low self-esteem and confidence		✓			
Appears and expresses low mood	✓				
Appears anxious and/or expresses feeling worried e.g., tearful, tense face and body posture, sweating, vocal/tics, complains of feeling unwell, stomach-ache etc., needs to visit the toilet frequently, continence needs, self-soothing behaviours e.g., rocking, fiddling with objects, rigid need for order and routine	✓				
Keeps feelings to themselves	✓				
Expresses negative thoughts about self, others and/or life generally				✓	
Has emotional episodes at home and/or school			✓		
Notes on key items					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Does not usually communicate how he is feeling to school staff or his parents. Becoming more withdrawn and gaming in his bedroom most evenings. 					
Other	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known

Has sensory sensitivities e.g., in response to noisier/crowded times in school such as smells and tastes in the lunch hall etc. Please see here for a broader understanding of a child/young person's sensory needs: sensory-processing-pre-referral-advice-oct18.pdf (mft.nhs.uk)		✓			
Has a diagnosis or awaiting a diagnosis/EHCP or undiagnosed needs			✓		
Appears unsettled in school and/or not their first choice of school		✓			
Complex needs e.g., special educational needs effecting capacity to attend school and anxiety when in school (can be hidden anxiety) including those relating to physical and medical needs e.g., displays reluctance or some discomfort with aspects of moving and handling etc.			✓		
Notes on key items <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Year 5, parents had discussed referring Aiden for an Autism assessment, though this was postponed due to the Covid-19 pandemic. 					

Together you reflect on the push/pull factors and begin to think of ideas:

<p>What are the things that are leading Aiden to feel less comfortable in school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Difficult journey into school on the tram - Anxiety around performance in lessons - Possible low self-esteem - Having to speak in class and work in groups - Difficulties in peer group, including perceived bullying - Sensory sensitivities through the day - 	<p>Why might Aiden feel more comforted at home?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - More control over sensory stimuli - Reduced pressure to complete schoolwork as parents are both at work during the daytime - Access to online community of friends who Aiden says he prefers as they 'get him'
<p>What does Aiden like/value about school? What are the things that Aiden finds supportive/may find supportive?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Experiences with Josh - Extending Aiden's social circle through social group/structured activity on playground - PSHE project on friendships skills/being a good friend - Academic: Assess if any need for greater differentiation/targeted support help to build skills and confidence - Partner work to support contributions in class <p>Having a timetable that support Aiden to e.g.:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Access to ELSA sessions which build Aiden's self-esteem and social skills. - Option to routinely eating in classroom (rather than hall) - Breakfast club option to support journey into school. 	<p>What might help Aiden to be more able to transition to school?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring that gaming activities only take place outside of school hours. - Calmer morning routines via parental use of Emotion Coaching script, trialing ear defenders in mornings, opportunity to drive Aiden to school earlier and meet a preferred adult or peer at the entrance. - If Aiden has to get the tram, access to calm space in school to regulate before going to his lessons. - Consider with Aiden communications tools in school to enable Aiden to signal to his teacher how he is feeling/with agreements of how he will be supported at these times, including a way to ask for help when needed with his work.

Appendix 3: Early Identification of Need Tool (EINT)

Trafford Council Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) Early Identification of Needs Tool (EINT)

Name (pupil): _____ DoB: _____

Completed by (names and relationship to pupil): _____

Date: _____ Name of school: _____

In consultation with the parent/caregiver please go through this questionnaire and rate your levels of concern by ticking the corresponding 'level of concern' box and adding additional notes where appropriate in the notes sections.

Level of concern					
Attendance	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Reduced or erratic attendance (please comment on patterns in notes section below)					
Expresses upset/distress to leave home in the morning					
Late for school					
Expresses distress/reluctance to attend certain lesson (any specific triggers and patterns that lead to avoiding partial or full days of absences please note below)					
Missing lessons/truancy					
Expresses upset/distress on return to home					
Reluctance to return to school after a school holiday					
Notes on key items					
Loss and Change	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Death of carer, parent, relative, friend					
Death of a pet					

Sudden or traumatic event: could include family member(s) experiencing job redundancy or change and financial pressures.					
Sudden separation from a family member (including family member working away from home/area).					
Moving to a new house, school, Key Stage, area (including international new arrivals), a late start or in-year transfer into a new school					
Came from a smaller primary school and/or outside the catchment area					
Loss of a classmate or sibling e.g., left for college/university					
Changes in after-school care					
Other					
Notes on key items					
Family Dynamic	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Carer/parents requiring advice and support/finding things hard					
Birth of a new child impacting relations and/or routine					
Family separation					
Family conflict including low level difficulties e.g., working through disagreements and/or different cultural considerations					
Practical problems bringing the child to school and/or problems travelling to school for young person					
Child acting as a carer to family member(s) with medical, mental health and/or substance dependency needs.					
Family member(s) who have had difficult experiences of school or who have avoided school					
Anxious to leave carer/parent (separation anxiety)					
Notes on key items					
Curriculum/Learning Needs	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Low levels of progress					
PE and/or games issues					
General learning needs					

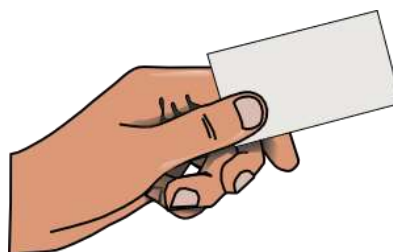
Specific subject difficulties and low confidence					
Exam or test anxiety					
Difficulties with relationships with school staff and/or particular teacher/adult.					
Negative view of school					
Problems keeping up in lessons					
Fear of failure, making mistakes and not meeting expectations					
Homework challenges					
Passive learning approach					
Notes on key items					
Social and Personal	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Has been or is being bullied and/or expresses worries about the threat of being bullied					
Appears to have few friends/friendship					
Difficulties with communication and language					
Difficulties and issues with play/break times (conflict, socially isolated and or one own)					
Fewer leisure interests in school and/or home					
Notes on key items					
Wellbeing	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Often appears tired or expresses feeling tired and difficulties with sleep routine.					
Has a medical condition and or previously serious illness/operation(s)					
Low self-esteem and confidence					
Appears and expresses low mood					
Appears anxious and/or expresses feeling worried e.g., tearful, tense face and body posture, sweating, vocal/tics, complains of feeling unwell, stomach-ache etc., needs to visit the toilet frequently, continence needs, self-soothing behaviours e.g., rocking, fiddling with objects, rigid need for order and routine					
Keeps feelings to themselves					
Expresses negative thoughts about self, others and/or life generally					

Has emotional episodes at home and/or school					
Notes on key items					
Other	High	Medium	Low	Not an issue	Not known
Has sensory sensitivities e.g., in response to noisier/crowded times in school smells and tastes in the lunch hall etc. Please see here for a broader understanding of a child/young person's sensory needs: sensory-processing-pre-referral-advice-oct18.pdf (mft.nhs.uk)					
Has a diagnosis or awaiting a diagnosis/EHCP or undiagnosed needs					
Appears unsettled in school and/or not their first choice of school					
Complex needs e.g., special educational needs effecting capacity to attend school and anxiety when in school (can be hidden anxiety) including those relating to physical and medical needs e.g., displays reluctance or some discomfort with aspects of moving and handling etc.					
Notes on key items					
Planning next steps:					
Make comments regarding:					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any strategies that you have used to support pupil previously • What has/could work well • Concerns you have around school's ability to support the pupil at present • Anything else • Your initial next steps to support the pupil based on discussions 					

Appendix 4: Card sort to support pupil views

Card Sort Activity

The card sort activity has been developed to gain an understanding about why a child/young person might not want to go to school. The cards cover a range of factors ranging from school environment, journey to and from school, social relationships, lessons, family dynamics and the home environment but the factors listed are not exclusive. Therefore, there should also be blank cards for a child/young person to record additional reasons which might affect whether they want to go to school.



Ideally, the cards should be used creatively and flexibly and as an exploratory tool to open up discussions about why a child/young person does not want to go to school. This could then lead to conversations about what factors might support them. This should ideally be done with an adult they know and trust, and in an environment where they feel relaxed and able to speak freely. Make sure the adult is familiar with the cards in advance, in case any sensitive topics are likely to arise.

An example script is included below to show how they might be used.

The cards I am going to ask you to choose from show different reasons why young people might not want to go to school. In a moment I will show you the cards and I will ask you to choose the ones which you think make it difficult for you to be happy and/or safe in school. There might be some things that make you want to stay at home or some things which make you not want to go to school. You can tell me which are 'like me' or 'not like me' to help me understand how best to help you.

If there is a card which does not affect whether you want to go to school, you could put it to one side. There might also be other reasons why you do not want to go to school. We can write these on the blank cards.


Then we might talk about/ draw things that help you to be happy and safe to go to school. This will help us to think about what we can do to support you to go to school safely and happily.


You might want to explore the extent to which the factors affect how much a child/young person wants to go to school by asking them to rank them for example. Obviously, this will depend upon the child's developmental level.


The card sort activity is an adaptation from Nuttall's (2011) card sort, which incorporated information from Birmingham Educational Psychology Service's Path to School (2008) and information from West Sussex Educational Psychology Service (2004) about factors associated with school attendance difficulties. It is also informed by Trafford Educational Psychology Service's Early Identification of Need Tool. This may be a helpful way to reflect on the pupil's views and experiences when putting together your action plan. It can be found at: [Virtual Mental Wealth Hub | Trafford Directory](#)

Like Me	Not Like Me
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Attendance Factors

<p>I find it difficult to leave the house in the morning.</p> 	<p>Talk me through your morning routine.</p> <p>What does that feel like for you? Is this better/worse after weekends and holidays? What would your ideal morning routine look like? What would you change if you could?</p>
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<p>The journey to/from school is difficult.</p> 	<p>Talk me through your journey to/from school.</p> <p>What modes of transport do you use? Who do you travel with? Does anything happen along the way? What does that feel like for you? What emotions would you identify? When are these strongest? What would your ideal journey look like? What would you change if you could?</p>
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<p>I have been out of school too long to go back.</p> 	<p>How would you score your desire to go back to school (e.g., 1 – 10)? What might make you more or less likely to want to return to school?</p>
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Loss and Change

Be sensitive to experiences of bereavement and loss within this section

Someone I am/was close to is not in my life anymore.



Be sensitive to experiences of bereavement and loss within this section

Can you tell me a bit more about that? What do you miss about that person?
What might help you to feel closer to them again?

My life at home has changed or is different to how it used to be.



What is different at home?
What would you change if you could?

My life at school has changed or is different to how it used to be.



What is different at school?
What would you change if you could?

I have recently changed school or year groups.



What emotions do you feel about the change?
What do you miss about your previous school/class?

I have recently moved house/flat.



What emotions do you feel about the change?
What do you miss about your previous house/flat/home?

Family Factors

I worry about my parent/carer during the day.



Can you tell me a bit more about that?

I need to stay with my parent/carer in the daytime.



Why do you need to stay with them? (e.g., illness, caring responsibilities, helping with a family business)
What might help them if you came to school?
What might they say if I asked them?

My family/carers do not want me to go to school.



How do you know?
Do you know why they think this?
What do you think about going to school?

My sibling doesn't/didn't go to school.



What is the same/different for you?
What do you think they want you to do?

Curriculum and Learning Factors

I don't like my lessons.



Which lessons are good/not so good? Why is this? (e.g., trouble keeping up, work is difficult or boring, teacher actions, behaviour management, peer difficulties).
Are there any lessons you have enjoyed previously? What made them good?
What would you change if you could?

I find some lessons difficult.



Which lessons are easier than others? Why is this? (e.g., teaching style, curriculum content, lack of equipment, unmet learning needs, peer difficulties)
Are there any lessons you have found easier previously? What made them easier?
What would you change if you could?

I worry about 'getting it wrong' in lessons or not meeting my targets.



Which lessons are good/not so good? Why is this?
Have you experienced 'getting it wrong' before? What happened?
Are there any lessons where you worry less about this? What helps?

My teachers do not always help me in the right way.



Which lessons/teachers are better/worse? Why is this?

Are there any lessons/teachers you have found helpful previously? What made them helpful? What would you change if you could?

I don't see the point in going to school.



Can you tell me a bit more about that?

What would you like to do when you are older? How might school help you to do that?

Social Factors

Other people are unkind or bully people in school.



What happens? Have you ever experienced this? (You may sensitively want to ask who is involved, what this looks like).

Where does bullying happen in school?

Are teachers aware of this? What do they do?

Is there anything else you'd like teachers to do to help?

I don't have people to talk to or spend time with at school.



What do you normally do at break and lunch times?

Do you have friends at school? Who would you count as a friend?

Are teachers aware of this? What do they do? Is there anything else you'd like teachers to do to help?

I sometimes feel like I don't fit in at school.



What makes you feel this way?

Is there anything you would like to change to fit in more?

Is there anything you would like others to know or understand better about you?

Other people do not understand me/my needs.



What makes you feel this way?

Is there anybody who does understand you?

What do they do differently?

Is there anything you would like others to know or understand better about you?

What would happen differently if they did?

Wellbeing

I feel tired at school.



Tell me about your typical sleep routine.

How do you feel when you wake up in the morning?

Does anything help you to feel more awake or wake up faster?

I feel worried at school or worry about coming into school.



What does your worry typically feel like?
Are there times when this is better or worse through the day/week/year?

How severe would you score it from 1 – 10?

What might make you feel a little better or a little worse in school?

I feel poorly or unwell at school.



Be aware of any existing medical conditions which may contribute to this

What usually feels poorly or unwell? How would you describe this?

How severe would you score it from 1 – 10?

What might make you feel a little in school?

I do not feel confident enough to go to school.



Can you describe what makes you feel this way?
Do you think your parents/carers/teachers/friends would agree?
What would need to change for you to feel confident enough?
How might you know when you were ready?

Going to school makes me feel bad/worried about myself.



Can you describe what things school makes you feel bad/worried about?
Are there times/lessons/teachers where this is better?

I am not listened to/believed when I talk about my feelings.



Can you tell me more about that?
What would it look like if someone was listening to you? What would happen?

I have mental health needs which make it difficult to attend school.



Be aware of any existing medical conditions which may contribute to this

Can you tell me more about that?
What might make you feel a little better in school?
Do you have any diagnoses which would be helpful for us to know about?

I have physical health needs which make it difficult to attend school.



Be aware of any existing medical conditions which may contribute to this

What usually feels poorly or unwell? How would you describe this?
How severe would you score it from 1 – 10?
What might make you feel a little better or a little worse in school?
Do you have any diagnoses which would be helpful for us to know about?

School Environment Factors

I find the school environment overwhelming.



It may be helpful to draw a map of the school for this activity, to identify difficult areas or hotspots.

Which bits of school are better?
What would you say is overwhelming? (e.g., noise, crowding, strong smells, lighting, size/navigation).
Is there anywhere in school that you like to spend time?
Is there anywhere in school that you try to avoid?

I do not have the right equipment for school.



What are you missing? (e.g., stationary, uniform, lunch money).
What might help with this?

I do not like using the toilet in school.



Can you tell me more about that?
Are there times when this is better/worse?

I do not like using the dining hall in school.



Can you tell me more about that?
Are there times when this is better/worse?

Home Factors

I am happier when I am at home.



Talk me through a typical day at home for you.

What makes you feel happy at home?
How happy would you say you feel at home from 0 – 10? How does this compare to at school?

I do activities that I enjoy at home.



Talk me through a typical day at home for you.

What activities do you like to do?
Who do you like to spend time with?

It is safer at home.



Talk me through a typical day at home for you.

What makes you feel safe at home?
How safe would you say you feel at home from 0 – 10? How does this compare to at school?

Other

There is something else.



Is there anything else that we haven't talked about?

What is important for the adults around you to know to help you?

The following strategy cards may also be used to explore what support or provision the child or young person might find helpful. Blank cards have been provided for the child to add their own ideas if needed:

Would Help Me	Would Not Help Me
Changing the way that I travel to or from school.	A chance to visit my school and/or teachers before going for the whole day.
Help to get to know my teachers and/or make new friends in school.	A way to speak to my parent/carer during the day.
Someone to stay with my parent/carer in the daytime.	A change to my lessons and/or subjects.
A chance to get up and move around after working for a while.	Ear defenders (noise reducing headphones).
Extra time to think before being expected to answer.	Adults quietly checking that I know what to do.
Not being expected to do group work.	Signals to ask for help (e.g., red/green card).
Being introduced to a group of people with similar interests e.g., for social times.	My own workspace with limited distractions.
Somewhere to do homework in school.	Attending online some of the time.
Help with the work in my lessons or to catch up on learning that I have missed.	Support for when people are unkind or bully me in school.
More people to talk to or spend time with at school.	Help to feel like I fit in at school.
Help other people to understand me/my needs.	Help me to feel less tired at school.
Help to feel less poorly or unwell at school.	More support with my mental health needs which make it difficult to attend school.
More support with my physical health needs which make it difficult to attend school.	Make changes to the school environment (e.g., make it less noisy, busy, smelly).

Help me to have the right equipment for school.	Do more activities or lessons that I enjoy in school.
Help to feel safer in school.	There is something else.

Appendix 5: Top Tips for the EYs transition handout

Factors to consider

1. How big is the difference between the PVI and school? This will give clues on how child may find the transition.

Social Setting e.g.

- Number of children in a room
- child led vs adult directed
- how long child attended setting
- number of changes of setting

Differences in



settings

Environment e.g.

- Size of classroom
- Outdoor access
- Quiet areas
- High handles/open doors
- Toilet & dining room location

Communication with parents

- How? App, face to face,
- When? Private or classroom
- Drop off routines
- Familiarity with staff- key person
- Parent expectations

Routines

- **Snacks**- e.g. structured, choice, foods, waiting.
- **Lunch times**- where they eat and how much help? travel to hall, eat in large busy hall or small room.
- **Circle time**: expectations to sit, how to leave, how long to sit, accessibility & motivation
- **Pick Up/Drop off**- business, times- flexibility
- **Toilet**- in room, down corridor
- **P.E.**
- **Structured vs unstructured**

2. Do we know the child's strength, preferences & needs? This will help ensure a positive start to school.

Language & Communication

Understanding of language
Expressive language, confidence to speak
Functional use

PSED

Understands and follows routines, Follows adult direction
Ability to cope with large groups, cooperative play
Child's motivators and rewards
Best ways to supporting child's regulation

Listening & Attention.

listen 1:1 with adult, small group or large group?
Length time?
Better with own or adult choice
Fidget toys or movement breaks help

Know Me



Physical Needs- help needed?

Able to use outdoor equipment
Dressing
Moving around environment, seating

Eating

Skills with cutlery, opening packages
Selective eating
Dietary requirements
Travelling to hall

Sensory Needs

Sensory over load- profile?
Noises e.g. hand dryer, crying
Need for quiet
Tactile defensive- avoid mess, no apron,
Mouthing toys- will child ingest or mouth, what types of materials

Continence

Child's level of independence
Happy with different toilets
Sits on toilet, feet on floor
Uses toilet to urinate and/or open bowels
Wipes bottom
Asks for help

Preferred play e.g.

Exploratory, sensory
Solitary
Schemas
Indoor/outdoor

3. Some ways to help

Develop a positive working relationship with parents

Share positives as well as struggles

A private space and time to talk

Listen & validate

Create an informal atmosphere where parent feels supported

Remember child can be very different home to school

A positive start



A Transition Plan:

Meet with setting & parents

Plan best steps e.g. visuals, visits, uniform play

Transition visits with parent including toilet

Gradual build up for some children

School & Parent to support school readiness

Small steps approach

Developing listening skills at home through play

Dressing skills- easy fastening & practice at home

Finding photo, name card, matching activities

Using cutlery, cups, recognising water bottle,

Practice journey to school

Practice morning routine

A flexible child centred approach

Listen to & observe child. Validate. Give positive feedback. Support regulation

Identify factors that may cause anxiety and ways to help

Key worker who child responds best to

Transition toys/fidget toy/realistic goals

Flexible start time to reduce stress of the rushed morning getting ready or busy drop off

Buffer/Transition time on arrival e.g. 10 minutes quiet time in book corner before

Supporting understanding

Reduce language levels

Opportunities to communicate

Use visuals e.g. communication board, Sign Along

Cues of reference- what is next? When is lunch and home time?

Visual timetable