

APPENDIX A

KEY QUESTIONS TO BE CONSIDERED TO ASCERTAIN WHETHER SUFFICIENT SUPPORT HAS BEEN PROVIDED

Identifying the Causes of Absence

Have you completed first day telephone calls/home visits?

Have letters and/or emails been sent to share your attendance concerns and has the parent responded with reasons for concerns?

- Have you followed a graduated process with regard to sending out warning letters to parents?

Have you met recently with the parents/carers and asked why the child isn't attending school?

- With parental agreement, has an action plan been drawn up with the parent and pupil with a review date and target for improved attendance?
- Have you ensured all partners agree with the actions on the plan and allowed for the parent and child to have their voice heard?
- If an action plan has been produced but is unsuccessful, it may be time to consider trying alternative options.

Have you carried out safe and well checks at the child's address?

- If the child has been absent from school for over 10 days and no reason has been given for the absence, contact the Inclusion service to make them aware.
- When you attend the address, does it look as though the family are still residing there?
- If the property looks unoccupied, have you put a note through the door to advise the parent to contact you?
- Do you have any further information as to the child's whereabouts? If you have any concerns about the child's safety and wellbeing, have you followed the appropriate safeguarding procedures?

Have you captured the child's voice to establish a reason and put support in place?

- Have you sought advice from the SENCO to help facilitate conversations with children who have SEN?
- It is a really good idea to speak to the child on a regular basis where you can. There may be a member of staff that the child trusts who would be the best person to maintain that contact.
- Putting time aside to keep those conversations going is important.

Identifying Patterns in Absence

Is the child missing certain days, is there a pattern?

- Are they missing certain lessons? This could be due to academic struggles, homework, or a difficult relationship with the teacher
- Consider that returning to education after weekends or school holidays may be a barrier. There may be some simple ways to support with this, such as working with parents to ensure that friendships are supporting the journey to school.

If regularly late, has the school start time been discussed with parents?

- Are they getting U codes on a daily basis? What are the reasons?
- What support or strategies could be put in place to address lateness?
- What incentives does the school offer e.g., Breakfast Club?

- Consider any parental issues that may affect lateness, for example, poor mental health or a
- Have you discussed a bedtime routine and good sleep hygiene with the parent and child? For example, ensuring the child is not accessing devices late at night

If you have numerous pupils with regular L codes – have you considered amending your times for imposing L and U codes?

- At what time do you impose a U code and are parents aware their child will be given a U code if they arrive after that time?
- Making parents aware that they could receive a Penalty Notice for 10 U codes in a 10-week period by warning them in writing will support your work in this area.

Have you checked if siblings are having the same absences?

- If they attend other schools, it may be useful to share strategies with each other.

Addressing the Causes of Absence

Have you considered making reasonable adjustments for a child who is struggling to attend such as:

- Staff members supporting the child to integrate into the canteen to build their confidence with eating in the assigned area.
- Withdrawing the child from lessons certain lessons on a short-term basis to build their resilience and alleviate anxiety about attending school.
- Providing the child with “Early Leave” cards, to allow them to avoid main transition times in corridors between classes.
- Offering a phased timetable to allow a transition back into school and to attend full-time. Where the child is in school but does not attend all lessons, spend time working with the pupil to support with any anxiety they are experiencing during time not spent in class.
- Permitting some pupils to sit exams in smaller examination venues e.g., smaller rooms of 10 or 12 pupils.
- If a child has sensory issues, consider allowing flexibility of the school uniform policy, such as allowing them to wear shorts instead of trousers, which may help to alleviate anxiety about attending.
- Consider the completion of a stress survey with the student to identify potential triggers. Following this, you may wish to proceed to a sensory survey.

Have family circumstances been considered and have you considered with the family what support may help them at this time?

- Have any referrals to other agencies been offered?
- Is obtaining uniform a barrier?
- Are there any financial barriers to address with family?
- Are there any housing or transport issues to address?
- Have there been any family breakups such as divorced parents or siblings moving out of the home?
- Are there any addiction issues within the home? If yes, have you considered making a referral to Turning Point with parental consent?
- Has the child or family experienced a loss or bereavement? If yes, have you considered a referral to the Laura Centre?

Have you made a referral to Family Help to provide support for the family?

- If so, there will be an allocated key worker that you can liaise with.
- Have you had a meeting with the parent and key worker to ensure a joint approach?
- If a family help referral has been made but rejected, Family Lives may be worth exploring as they are not directly linked with Children's Social Care and families may be less nervous about engaging with them.

Have you considered where the family live in relation to school and considered whether the journey to school is a barrier?

- Have you discussed what the options can be offered if the journey is the barrier? For example, a walking buddy.
- Have you discussed the use of mobile phone apps, such as life 360, to alleviate parental or child concerns about the journey?
- It is worth suggesting that the parents go through the journey with their child, for example, walking the journey with them during a quiet time?

Is the child a Young Carer, and is this having an impact on their attendance?

- If so, have you sought support from young carer support agencies?

Have you considered whether the child or parent has experienced a previous trauma that could be affecting the child's attendance?

- Are all staff trained in trauma informed practice?

Have you considered whether the child have unmet learning needs that have yet to be assessed resulting in them being reluctant to attend school? *If so, ensure you are mindful of long wait times for a diagnosis, and that a diagnosis is not needed for support to be put in place*

- Have you received transition information from the child's primary school? Consider contacting them to see if there have been prior attendance concerns
- Consider using online tools to gain an insight on a child's academically ability and if further assessments are needed, such as a Dyslexia screening test.
- If the parent consents, you can make a referral to the child's GP for testing, if required.

If an EHCP is in place :-

- Are the outcomes being supported?
- When was this last reviewed by School?
- Are termly and annual reviews of the EHCP in place?
- Have you captured the parent and child's voice regarding the EHCP?
- Have you contacted SENA to make them aware that the child is not attending?

Has the child's health been considered?

- Have you received any medical evidence from the parent?
- It may be useful to ask the parent to seek further medical evidence so the school have a better understanding of the child's needs
- Could the school contact the GP/consultant with parents' consent to request further information? Please ensure you are in line with guidance around requesting medical evidence, contained within the "Working together to improve school attendance" guidance (Paragraph 363)

- The Care Navigator can be contacted, with the parents' consent, to establish whether the
- Is the child suffering from anxiety – have parents been advised to seek a referral to CAMHs via their GP?
- The medical needs team in the Inclusion Service can provide support and advice around medical needs.

Have you sought the advice of the Inclusion Forum/ Inclusion Partnership in your area?

- If yes, have you put into place the actions recommended and allowed time for this to take effect?

Have you considered whether the child is displaying signs of Emotionally Based School Absence?

- If so, the Partnership Engagement Officers under the Secondary Education Inclusion Partnerships can offer support and advice to schools
- Have you read the “profile risk factors” for EBSA?

Has the child received a diagnosis for ADHD/Autism or displayed traits?

- If so, have you approached ADHD solutions Autism Outreach for further guidance or referred the parent to ADHD solutions for further support?

Have you considered entering into an Attendance Contract with the parent with the assistance of the LA?

- The Local Authority Attendance Team can provide advice around this.

Is issuing a Penalty Notice in this case appropriate after considering any obligations and protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010? Please seek further advice from the Attendance Team at attendanceteam@leics.gov.uk if you are unsure.