

Educational Neglect

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What is Educational Neglect?

The Department for Education (DfE) has stated, 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect'.

The NSPCC has cited, 'failure to ensure regular school attendance which prevents the child reaching their full potential academically' as one of their six forms of neglect.

"Working together to safeguard children" provides a neglect description, "The persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development" (neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide suitable education).

For local attendance information, please see [Education Access Service](#)



Why is it important to highlight Educational Neglect?

- Educational neglect, persistent and severe absence are recurring themes in Safeguarding Practice Reviews. In contrast, regular school attendance is a protective factor for the most vulnerable children and young people, providing opportunities for support whilst giving them the best possible start in life.
- In accepting that “school attendance is everyone’s business” the intention is, not to increase social care referrals, but to agree a pathway that creates a shared responsibility for responding to “educational neglect”. See [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)
- Professor Jan Horwarth, describes *“educational neglect as involving a carer failing to provide a stimulating environment, show an interest in the child’s education (**at school or otherwise**), support their learning, or respond to any special needs, as well as failing to comply with state requirements regarding education and attendance”*.

What the data tells us

There is a demonstratable link between absence and attainment at the end of KS2 and KS4.

On average, pupils with higher absence over key stage 4 (year ten to year eleven) had lower GCSE attainment in 2019. This is the most recent DfE data on the link between absence and attainment. Pupils who did not achieve grades 9-4 in English and maths GCSEs in 2019 had an absence rate of 8.8%, compared with 5.2% among pupils who achieved grade 4 in both subjects, and 3.7% among pupils who achieved grade 5 or above. Pupils who were persistently or severely absent (who missed more than 10% and 50% respectively of possible school sessions) had lower average attainment. 35.6% of persistently absent pupils, and just 11.3% of severely absent pupils achieved grades 9-4 in English and maths (compared to 67.6% of all pupils)

Research shows associations between regular absence from school and extra-familial harms. This includes crime (90% of young offenders had been persistently absent) and serious violence (83% of knife possession offenders had been persistently absent in at least 1 of the 5 years of study).

Chronic/Severe absence (including “not in education”)

- [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#) requires us to review our shared thresholds and definitions of persistent (90% or less) and severe (50% or less) absence from school.
- The Education Access Service has agreed that an indicator of Educational Neglect is where a child has less than 75% attendance over 3 terms and this significantly impacts their welfare and/or educational outcomes and is likely to result in the **serious impairment** of the child’s health; well-being, development and/or life chances.



Indicators- Educational Neglect

Parent(s)/Carer(s) consistently failing in maintaining schooling or identifying provision for their child.

Parent(s)/Carer(s) not engaging in school meetings to address attendance concerns.

Parent(s)/Carer(s) unable to provide substantiated reasons for absences from school.

Parent(s)/Carer(s) not engaging in statutory or non-statutory interventions to improve attendance.

Parents failure to prevent children from becoming PA- (below 90% attendance) and/or severely absent over a period equal to an academic year (9 months/6 half-terms).

Parent(s)/Carer(s) “won’t” or “can’t” enforce boundaries and routines.

Child’s refusal to attend school/adhere to parental boundaries.

Evidence of adverse childhood experiences or multiple moves (school/addresses).

Parent(s)/Carer(s) not accessing education from an early age (accessing Early years settings)


Parent(s)/Carer(s) of children who are electively home educated who do not provide a suitable education.





Support/Action Attendance percentage



- **90-100% All schools should** adopt a universal whole school approach (school, parent, child, and community) to attendance: Ensuring that internal policies and processes are applied to promote good attendance and/or challenge where concerns arise.
 - **70-90%** Schools should consider all early help (single agency) options including Education Access Service, School Nursing service, Police etc. An Early help assessment may be offered. Also consider Integration consultation panel as an early intervention.
 - **50-70%** Where attendance concerns remain multi-agency targeted support may be considered following the completion of an early help assessment.
 - **50% or less** school attendance should trigger all schools and partners to consider “educational neglect”. Consider professionals meeting/Integration practitioner meetings as a forum to adopt a multi-agency approach.
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All practitioners should:

- Consider the significance of educational neglect if they become aware of persistent and/or severe absence from school or early years setting.
- Demonstrate Professional curiosity in relation to children not in school including those who are Electively home educated/not on roll.
- Explore with parents and carers as to why children are not registered at/attending school or in receipt of appropriate education.
- Consider how they and others might resolve the absence from school. E.g – Multi-agency approach, consult with Early help colleagues, EHAST, Integration practitioners, family meetings, Fast Track meetings, School attendance panel.
- Seek advice from the child's school and [Education Access Service](#)
- Refer to [Working together to improve school attendance \(applies from 19 August 2024\) \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)

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