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DEFINITION

The Department for Education (DfE) states 'persistent failure to send children to school is a clear sign of neglect'. The NSPCC cites '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 and case law is clear that 'a failure to provide suitable education is capable of satisfying the significant harm test', whether the child is on a school roll or not.



Educational Neglect



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WHY IT MATTERS

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.

Poor attendance increases the risks of children:

- not meeting their academic potential and underachieving
- becoming NEET (not in employment, education or training)
- being victims of harm, abuse or exploitation
- becoming involved in criminal or gang-related activity

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HOW TO SUPPORT OR REPORT CONCERNS

Poor Attendance - Staged Intervention Process | Bradford Schools Online

Children's Initial Contact Point on 01274 433999

Education Safeguarding Team Tel: 01274 437043

Elective Home Education Team 01274 439340

Education Access Team 01274 439393

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WHAT THE DATA TELLS US

There is a demonstrable link between absence and outcomes at the end of KS2 and KS4.

In 2022/23 26000 children in Bradford were Persistently Absent (less than 90% attendance) and 3000 were Severely absent (less than 50% attendance). Research shows associations between regular absence from school and poor mental and physical outcomes alongside harms (90% of the YJS cohort have been PA).

Children who are being home educated is an increasing but unstable cohort; hundreds of children become home educated and return to school each year in the Bradford District

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ACTIONS / NEXT STEPS

- Consider the significance of educational neglect if you become aware of persistent and/or severe absence from school.
- Demonstrate Professional curiosity in relation to children not in school including those who are not on a school roll.
- Challenge parents and carers as to why children are not in/attending school.
- Consider how you and others might resolve the absence from school.
- Seek advice from the child's school or the Education Safeguarding Team.
- Refer to the Working Together to Improve School Attendance document and EHE Guidelines for LAs

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THINGS TO CONSIDER

- Are the child's educational development needs being met?
- Are learning needs being addressed so learning and progress can be seen appropriate to identified needs?
- Are there aspects of the provision that are impacting negatively on the educational development of the child?
- Is a full-time education offer in place?
- Has each child in a family had an application made for a school place or has a parental decision to Electively Home Educate been made?
- Have other teams/agencies who may be able to support a young person been notified e.g. health or SEND?

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INDICATORS / WARNING SIGNS

- Being absent from school regularly or for long periods of time
- Not being provided with suitable home education if not on a school roll
- Falling behind age-related expectations
- Parents failing to maintain or secure provision
- Failing to engage in school meetings
- Failing to provide reasons for absences
- Not engaging in interventions to improve attendance
- Failing to prevent children becoming PA or SA
- Child 'refusal' to attend