

# Graduated pathway to support attendance in school



# Introduction

This document provides a framework of strategies, interventions and approaches which could be implemented by schools and settings in York to support children and young people who are experiencing challenges due to anxiety, neurodiversity and/or mental health difficulties.

This is not a 'tick list'. It is expected that schools will consider each element in the pathway and whether they may improve attendance for the child or young person. This guidance applies to any pupils displaying any social, emotional or mental health issue that is affecting their attendance. It is not only for pupils who have a diagnosed mental disorder, or a disability or special educational need.

The graduated pathway sits alongside the **CYC Ordinarily Available Provision** document and should be implemented together with the DfE guidance from Feb 23; 'Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools. Summary of responsibilities where a mental health issue is affecting attendance and examples of effective practice.' - **Mental health issues affecting a pupil's attendance: guidance for schools - GOV.UK ([gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk))**. The guidance includes sector-led effective practice examples of how schools do this well.

# Graduated pathway to support attendance

‘The role of school staff is to ensure that the school is a calm, safe, and supportive environment where all pupils want to be and are keen and ready to learn.’ - **Mental health issues affecting a pupil’s attendance Feb 23.**

## Universal Offer

### School/Academy Trust partnerships

- » Clear attendance focus in schools including regular reviews of data and opportunities to invite parents to share any concerns
- » Positive messaging to encourage attendance (that may include rewards)
- » First day check on absence
- » Well-resourced pastoral team to provide secure base model - **Secure Base Model - Secure Base in Schools - Groups and Centres (uea.ac.uk)**
- » Clear and consistent pastoral systems and responses that are effective for the vast majority of students
- » Clear communication from settings with families on the structure of pastoral staffing; who to contact, when
- » Awareness of neurodiversity; consistent, explicit, predictable, with low-stimulus aspects of environment
- » Mental health leader in school
- » Range of strategies are routinely available to collect pupil voice e.g. Talking Mats

### Local Authority

- » School attendance Team; school attendance advisor, school attendance lead and attendance enforcement and data officer
- » Universal Offer from LSHub including advice lines and training
- » Support from Family Hubs

### Other agencies / Alternative Provision / Voluntary Sector (commissioned by school)

- » Family Information Service
- » SENDIASS

## Threshold

Emerging impact on attendance – CYP/ parents describe anxiety about attendance to school. CYP struggling to attend all lessons. Masking. Avoiding difficult situations in school. Separation anxiety.

## Stage I

### School/Academy Trust partnerships

- » Meeting in school with family, class teacher / Head of Year / member of pastoral team and CYP to jointly identify barriers to attendance, recognising risk and resilience factors, as well as push and pull factors to support effective intervention.
- » This pathway is shared with families
- » Key staff have received EBSA training

### Local Authority

- » School wellbeing service – advice
- » Wellbeing in Mind Team – advice
- » EP EBSA training
- » Learning Support Hub training around specific areas of need eg Autism

## Threshold

Parents are describing barriers due to anxiety / neuro-diversity / mental health are beginning to emerge to regular attendance. There may be regular late attendance or broken weeks with one or more days missed.

## Stage 2

### School/Academy Trust partnerships

All above plus;

- » Assess, plan, do, review approach to meeting needs
- » Flexibility with routines and curriculum
- » Identification of preferred learning styles
- » Safe place/quiet area in the setting
- » Interventions might include:
  - » Wellbeing based approach
  - » Emotion Coaching
  - » ELSA provision
  - » Alternatives to the start and ends of the day

### Local Authority

All the above plus:

- » Consideration of use of the Early Help assessment toolkit Tools ([saferchildrenyork.org.uk](http://saferchildrenyork.org.uk))



## Threshold

Parents and school are able to identify patterns of non-attendance triggered by anxiety / neuro-diversity / mental health over a school term.

## Stage 3

### School/Academy Trust partnerships

All above plus:

- » Involvement from SENCO to support potential identification or reassessment of SEN
- » Potential alteration of curriculum offer to avoid trigger points
- » Consideration given to modifications to the start and end of the school day eg soft landings and structured finishes
- » Multi-disciplinary approach – drawing people together to make a shared plan
- » Sensory or regulatory breaks
- » Peer mentoring / Circle of Friends / Buddy approach
- » Activities that are stress reducing e.g. games, dance, colouring, gardening
- » Implementation of strategies advised by the Effective Strategies document – [gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/mental-health-issues-affecting-a-pupils-attendance-guidance-for-schools)

### Local Authority

All above plus:

- » School wellbeing service – case holding
- » Wellbeing in Mind Team – case holding
- » Learning Support Hub – interventions to support areas of need
- » AP QA and directory
- » Support to MDT Meetings

### Other agencies / Alternative Provision / Voluntary Sector (commissioned by school)

All above plus:

- » One day of time limited AP from directory or internal school equivalent considered, if it is agreed this may positively impact on attendance to school
- » At KS4, planning for transition to post 16 offer eg through work experience offer alongside the school offer

## **Threshold**

CYP missing a two week block due to anxiety / neuro-diversity / mental health.

## **Stage 4**

### **School/Academy Trust partnerships**

All above plus;

- » Gradual, stepped plan: a rapid return to school should be planned at the earliest opportunity alongside good support and adaptations within the school
- » Consideration of Early Help Assessment
- » Consideration of CAMHS involvement
- » Formal involvement from SENCO to ensure consideration given to other SEN eg Sensory Needs (amended uniform), Social Communication (alternative plans at unstructured time) etc
- » Safeguarding visits
- » Home visit to work with CYP to understand and plan for barriers to attendance
- » Consideration of a temporary reduction to the timetable to reduce demand and avoid triggers
- » Small group offer for targeted interventions and/or agreed areas of the curriculum
- » Short term 1:1 delivery offer for targeted areas of the school day
- » Modifications to environment eg access through a different entrance, pass to access different toilets
- » For CYP with an EHCP, a Review meeting is held
- » Flagging absence to the LA where statutory thresholds met

### **Local Authority**

All the above plus:

- » Strategic links to CAMHS
- » Robust Early Help systems and MASH
- » Attendance Support Advice and guidance and signposting

## Threshold

Prolonged absence from school despite modifications to environment and curriculum.

## Stage 5

### **School/Academy Trust partnerships**

All above plus:

- » Use of remote learning eg google classroom, AVI robots, work packages for home completion
- » Key worker model offering direct or remote contact to maintain positive relationships with the CYP
- » Consideration of request for EP advice
- » Referral to CAMHS for initial assessment
- » All professional advice routinely followed including all reasonable adjustments
- » New stepped plan: a return to school is co-produced, gradual and based on incremental, small steps. Beware attempting 'too much, too soon' as this can cause setbacks for the pupil in the reintegration plan

### **Local Authority**

All the above plus:

- » Reintegration Support Service
- » Consideration of the Dynamic Support Register

### **Other agencies / Alternative Provision / Voluntary Sector (commissioned by school)**

All above plus:

- » Consideration of impact of AP from directory or planning for transition to post 16 offer and look to extend if appropriate



## **Threshold**

After a period of interventions and support CYP remains unable to tolerate any attendance to school or AP.

CYP is open to CAMHS

Medical evidence that the CYP is unable to attend school temporarily and Stages 1 - 5 of provision have been implemented and reviewed.

## **Stage 6**

### **School/Academy Trust partnerships**

All above plus:

- » Request for support from Medical Needs Tuition Team

### **Local Authority**

All the above plus:

- » Medical Needs Tuition Team
- » Consideration of the NHS Key Worker Approach

### **Other agencies / Alternative Provision / Voluntary Sector (commissioned by school)**

- » N/A - AP has not been successful or is not appropriate



## How can parents help?

- » **Speak to your child's school** – if you're worried about any problems so you can work with them to make things better.
- » **Let your school know promptly** – if your child is ill and cannot go to school.
- » **Build positive routines** – Try to have structure around regular routines, especially around healthy eating and exercise. A good night's sleep is also important, so have a fixed time for going to bed and getting up. The Sleep Charity has relaxation sleep tips for children.
- » **Be there to listen** – Regularly ask your child how they're doing, to help them get used to talking about their feelings, and know there's always someone there to listen. You can get tips on Young Minds: How to talk to your child about mental health – ([youngminds.org.uk/parent/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-mental-health](https://youngminds.org.uk/parent/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-mental-health))
- » **Support them through difficulties** – Pay attention to how your child is feeling or behaving and try to help them work through difficulties. It may not be easy facing challenging behaviour, but try to help them understand what they're feeling and why. Learn more from the Maudsley Charity on difficult behaviour – ([maudsleycharity.org/familiesunderpressure](https://maudsleycharity.org/familiesunderpressure)).
- » **Stay involved in their life** – Show interest in their life and what's important to them. It not only helps them value who they are but also makes it easier for you to spot problems and support them.
- » **Encourage their interests** – Support and encourage your child to explore their interests. Being active or creative, learning new things and being a part of a team helps connect us and boost our mental wellbeing.
- » **Take what they say seriously** – Listening to and valuing what they say makes them feel valued. Consider how to help them work through their emotions in constructive ways ([thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/relaxation-tips](https://thesleepcharity.org.uk/information-support/children/relaxation-tips)).
- » **Work closely with the school** and other agencies if attendance problems develop.

## Find out more

If your child is anxious or worried about going to school you can speak to other organisations that might be able to help you and your child:

### **CAMHS Single Point of Access**

Email: [tewv.camhsspayselby@nhs.net](mailto:tewv.camhsspayselby@nhs.net)

Call: 01904 615345

### **Family Information Service**

Visit: [yor-ok.org.uk](http://yor-ok.org.uk)

### **CAMHS Crisis Line**

Call: 0800 0516171

### **Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)**

Email: [mash@york.gov.uk](mailto:mash@york.gov.uk)

Call: 01904 551900

### **Special Educational Needs Independent Advice Service (SENDIAS)**

Visit: [yorksendiass.org.uk](http://yorksendiass.org.uk)

Call: 01904 554319

### **York Mind**

Visit: [yorkmind.org.uk](http://yorkmind.org.uk)

Call: 01904 643363

### **York Travellers Trust**

Visit: [ytt.org.uk](http://ytt.org.uk)

Call: 01904 630526

### **The Island**

Visit: Enhancing children's quality of life through mentoring ([theislandyork.org](http://theislandyork.org))

Call: 01904 628449

### **For more information on school absence in York visit:**

[york.gov.uk/SchoolAttendance](http://york.gov.uk/SchoolAttendance)

If you would like this document in an alternative format, please contact:

 (01904) 551550       [ycc@york.gov.uk](mailto:ycc@york.gov.uk)  
 @CityofYork       @cityofyork

It is available in the following languages:

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Ta informacja może być dostarczona w twoim własnym języku. (Polish)

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