

Emotionally Based School Non-Attendance (EBSNA) Graduated Approach



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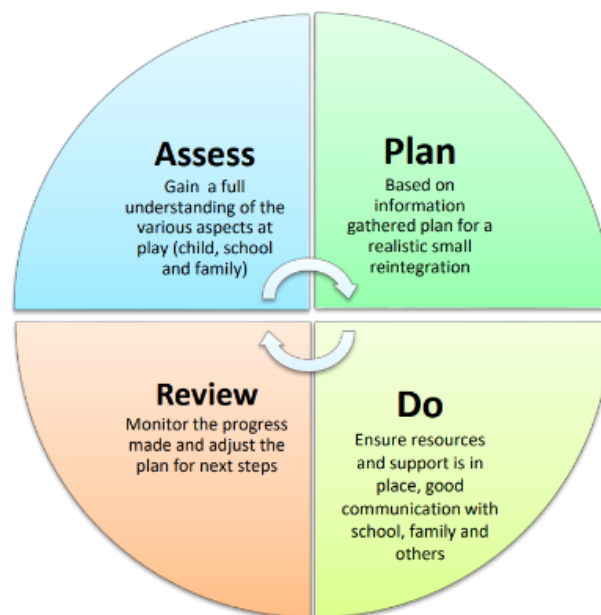
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The graduated approach

Children and young people (CYP) experiencing emotionally based school non-attendance will require reasonable adjustments and support. For some CYP, these may be shorter-term, whilst for others there may be repeated cycles of support needed to stabilise attendance.

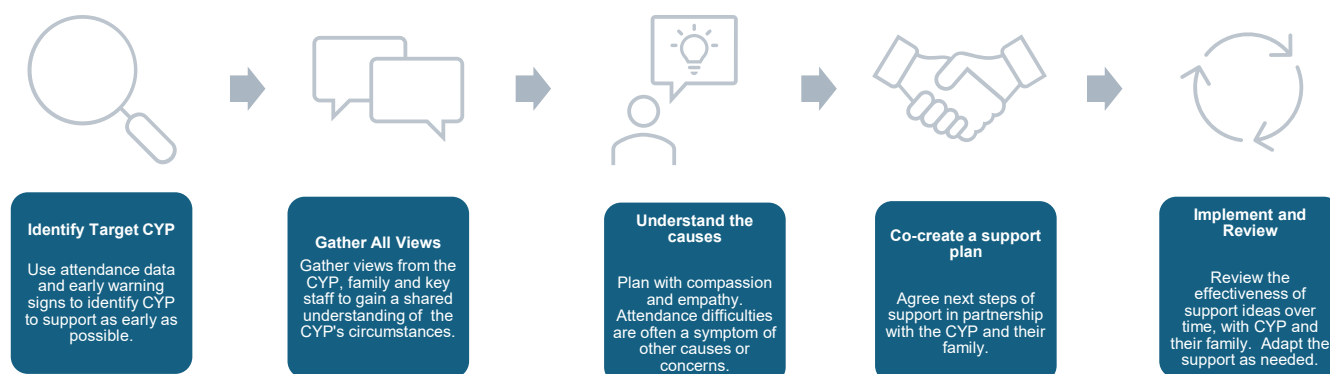
In line with the SEND Code of Practice ([SEND code of practice: 0 to 25 years - GOV.UK](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/616722/SEND_Code_of_Practice_0_to_25_years.pdf)), schools should identify needs as early as possible and follow a process of assess, plan, do, review. In doing so, CYP are likely to be placed on the school's SEN Register, as ongoing support and progress monitoring is required over time.



Patience is required when supporting CYP experiencing barriers to attendance as change and progress can at times feel slow despite best efforts. However, it is important to remain positive, listen to the CYP and their family and be prepared to unpick challenges along the way, as well as setting realistic, small step targets, and being creative in exploring ways to overcome barriers for each CYP.



Overview of what is expected



Summary of best practice

Many of the factors associated with positive outcomes for a CYP experiencing barriers to school attendance will already be present within your education setting and will be part of your graduated approach, however a brief summary of this good practice includes:

- Having a whole-school approach and ethos to wellbeing, inclusion and achievement.
- Working collaboratively with parents, staff and the CYP.
- A flexible approach to implementing the necessary support for school attendance.
- A curiosity to understanding the reason for the school non-attendance.
- A commitment to following the graduated approach of Assess, Plan, Do, Review. This includes the need to gather appropriate evidence, make adjustments and liaise with multi-agency partners when necessary.
- A focus on early intervention and a drive to create a rapid return to education (where possible), with necessary adjustments and adaptations in place.
- A personalised approach as every CYP's needs will be different and will require a bespoke plan.
- Maintenance of appropriate training and CPD by staff leading the support to CYP and families experiencing EBSNA.

For further guidance on the minimum expectations and what is expected as best practice, please see the accompanying guide: ['EBSNA Good Practice Guidance in Schools'](#).



Assess

This stage involves gathering information about the CYP's EBSNA needs. This will require input from parents/carers, teaching/support staff and the CYP themselves.

Information from a baseline assessment is required to better understand a CYP's personal needs, the challenges they have faced and the support they may find helpful.

Please refer to the [EBSNA Toolkit](#) for helpful resources and methods that can be used to capture this information.

Please take the views of the CYP seriously. Whatever their concern or difficulty, it is acting as a barrier to the CYP accessing their education.

When to assess?

- Attendance reduces to 95% or lower.
- Young person shows increased signs of distress in school and/or difficulty in coming to school.

What to do?

- Observe patterns to non attendance (e.g., specific lessons, times of the day, days of the week).
- Discuss with colleagues (Form Tutor, Head of Year, Class/ Subject Teacher(s), SENCO, Pastoral Team etc).
- Discuss with parents/ carers.
- Discuss with the young person.

How to gather data?

- Speak with attendance team / administrators in school
- Round robin tool - to collect staff views and perspectives
- Hold a joint parent/carer meeting in school, and **then**;
- Use the Attend Framework together (child or young person, family, school staff).



Plan

All the information gathered from the assessment phase must be combined and reviewed. This can then be used to create a plan of support, bespoke to the CYP's circumstances and based on the highlighted areas of need.

The plan will link areas of current difficulty with specific interventions, strategies and resources outlined to support the CYP. Ideally, specific staff will be allocated to actions and a timescale agreed for implementation before review.*

**Please note that timescales will vary and will be dependent on the needs of the CYP and the support planned. A flexible approach is therefore encouraged when planning support.*

When to plan

- A plan should be made after baseline information has been gathered and collated from home, school and the young person.

What to use?

- EBSNA additional support plan.
- EBSNA Matrix of Support.
- ATTEND Framework and associated provision recommendations.

Who is required?

- Collective decision making regarding targets and support that can be implemented.
- A key member of staff needs to take the lead on generating and circulating the final plan to all those who need it. Ideally, this should be the SENCO.
- This member of staff should be able to approve the support that can be introduced.



Do

Agree to carry out the 'Do' stage of the plan for a length of time that suits the CYP's needs and matches the selected strategies or interventions.

It is essential to continue providing [Quality First Teaching](#), alongside reasonable adjustments, noting how these make a difference. Ensure that provision is delivered as it is meant to be or refined with adjustments made if necessary.

Allow time for strategies to be embedded and to make a difference. Capture the impact and effectiveness of any support strategies that have been implemented by noticing what has changed and what is different.

Who?

- Consider who needs to be involved in actioning the plan - do specific interventions and strategies require specific people, and if so, are they aware of the plan?
- Consider who needs to agree the plan. Are there elements of staffing or specific resources that need approval in school?

What to use?

- EBSNA additional support plan.

Evaluation Preparation

- Prepare for the review and evaluation of impact stage, by starting to collect data on effectiveness.
- Consider observational data, attendance data, qualitative reports, student, family and staff views etc.



Review

The effectiveness of the plan should be regularly monitored and reviewed. Adjustments should be made as required but based upon the CYP's progress and response to the support provided.

It should be agreed **who** will attend the reviews and **how often** these should be. *This will be different for every CYP.* Greater frequency, for example fortnightly, is recommended initially to make a positive start and to respond to any teething problems. Use our [EBSNA additional support plan](#) for this.

Discretion and flexibility are required when agreeing review timescales. For example:

1. **Some CYP need time to consolidate progress.** If they have made positive steps forward by a review date, but it is felt that they need another week or two to repeat and embed these steps of progress, then this should be supported.
2. **Some CYP need support to simplify and adapt plans sooner, to protect their wellbeing.** If it is evident they are becoming overwhelmed and struggling to cope, prior to a review date, the review timescales can be adjusted and brought forward. Flexibility is needed to safeguard a CYP's mental health and wellbeing.

When to review?

- This is personalised in each CYP's circumstances. Ideally, the sooner the better, so that adjustments can be made in a timely way to promote increases in attendance whilst supporting wellbeing.

What to do?

- Invite relevant partners to attend a review meeting, this may include any of the following: parents/ carers, young person, school staff, external agencies.
- Review the small steps agreed in the planning phase and document the impact of these.
- Identify next steps as a result of the information shared.

How to record the information?

- EBSNA additional support plan.



Repeating the cycle

It is likely that one round of Assess-Plan-Do-Review (APDR) is not going to be sufficient to support a CYP to return to school full-time. Therefore, repeat cycles of APDR should be expected as part of the planning and provision for any CYP experiencing barriers to attendance.

It may be appropriate to seek further support and advice from external agencies, as part of this graduated approach. Please see [Warwickshire's Graduated Approach to EBSNA Levels of Support table below](#).

Safe and well checks - monitoring children and young people's wellbeing

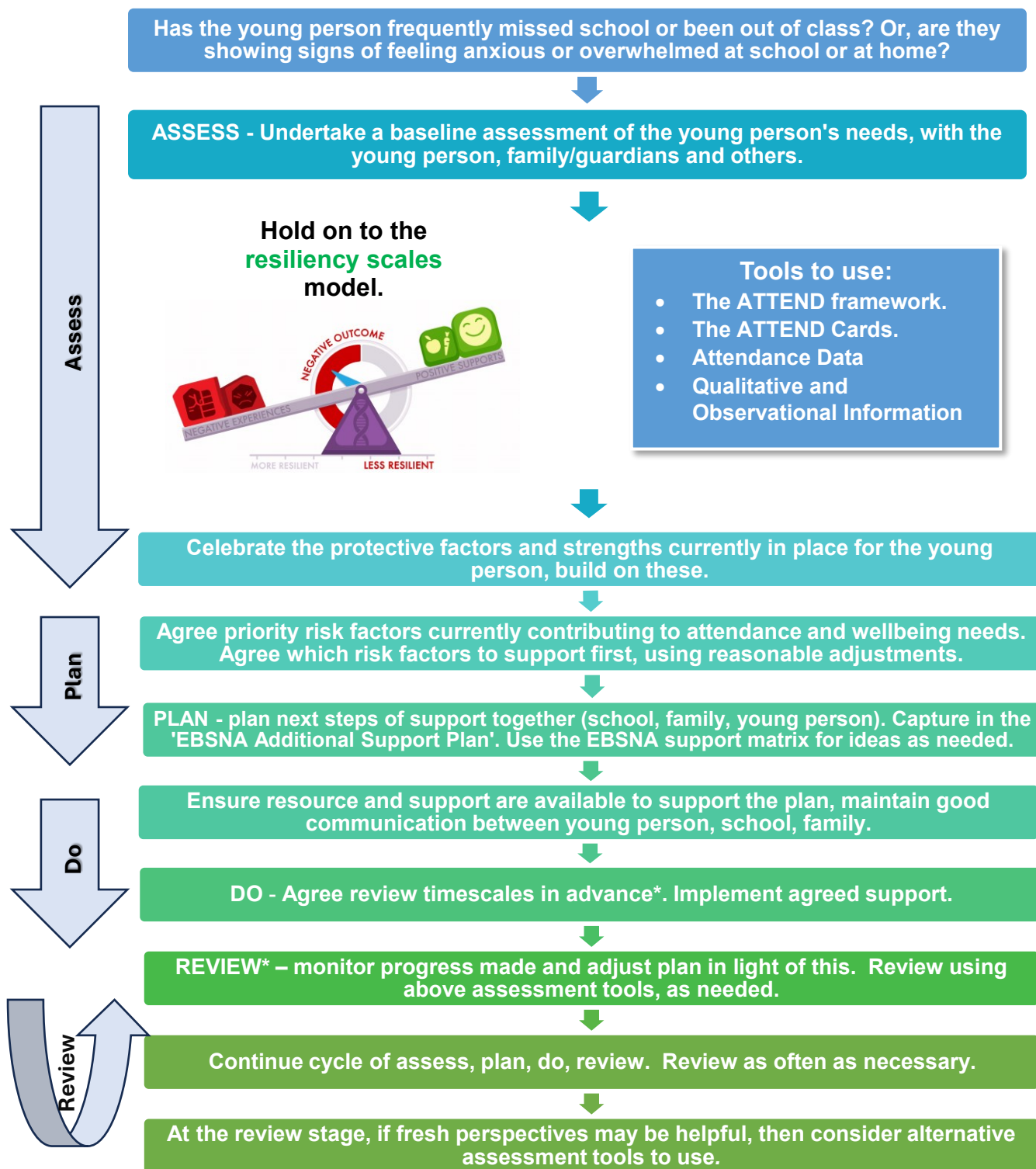
School staff must undertake safe and well checks for CYP who are not attending, in line with statutory expectations outlined in Chapter 2 of the '[Working Together to Improve School Attendance](#)' guidance (DfE, August 2024), which emphasises the importance of day-to-day processes to follow up absence and ensure pupil welfare.

School staff should consider initiating a safe and well check when:

- The CYP has been **absent for one day** and the absence is **unexplained, out of character, or raises safeguarding concerns**. All concerns must be raised with the school's designated safeguarding lead.
- The CYP has been **absent for three or more days** with **no contact or confirmation of wellbeing**.
- There are **known vulnerabilities, for example** SEND, previous safeguarding concerns, mental health issues).
- **Repeated patterns** of absence emerge, even if individual absences are short.
- **No reliable adult** has confirmed the CYP is safe and well.



EBSNA Assessment flowchart - exploring a young person's barriers to attendance



Warwickshire's graduated approach to EBSNA - levels of support

Universal Support	Targeted Support	Specialist Support
Supporting children and young people through assess, plan, do, review...		
<p>At this stage, the focus is on effective early intervention and preventative support, for all young people.</p> <p>After this, further assess, plan, do, review may not be needed.</p>	<p>If school attendance difficulties continue, at this stage, the focus is on additional provision at SEN support to support children's wellbeing and to re-stabilise school attendance.</p>	<p>At this stage, the focus is on bespoke, individualised support for CYP experiencing more entrenched EBSNA needs to safeguard the wellbeing of young people and their families, and to consider small, manageable steps of personalised progress.</p>
<p>If you have initial concerns, use our ATTEND assessment tool as early as possible with the CYP, their family and staff who know the CYP best. For example, if a CYP is presenting as more distressed on arrival to school, or if their attendance is reducing towards 95%.</p> <p>Identify a key adult to lead on support for the CYP and family.</p> <p>Agree early support ideas and reasonable adjustments. Please see the EBSNA Matrix of Support for inspiration. At universal support, these ideas may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teaching relaxation and calming ideas • Using a feelings thermometer • An adapted morning arrival routine • Safe, fun arrival activities • A buddy system for the playground/classroom • Added support for reassurance in some lessons • Accommodating sensory needs • Good information sharing between schools at transition points, see transition support videos. 	<p>You should review the CYP's needs and priority areas for support. You can revisit the ATTEND framework for this.</p> <p>Or alternatively;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use the ATTEND pupil voice cards to agree personalised support strategies with CYP. Or; • Use the School Wellbeing Cards to capture CYP voice. Or; • Use the Mapping the Landscape of Your School (Primary or Secondary editions) to think about changes to school life, with CYP. <p>Convene a professionals' meeting with SEND and Inclusion support services.</p> <p>Agree further personalised support ideas for the CYP's wellbeing and school attendance. Please see the EBSNA Matrix of Support for inspiration. At targeted support, these ideas may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily meet-and-greet on arrival. • Regular check-ins with a trusted adult. • Personalised emotional literacy tools such as the 5-point scale or Zones of Regulation. • Adaptations to curriculum tasks/demands. 	<p>If EBSNA concerns are continuing to develop despite reasonable adjustments and initial SEN Support, begin direct involvement from SEND and Inclusion Services such as Educational Psychology Service (EPS), Specialist Teaching Service (STS).</p> <p>School should then coordinate a 'Team around the Student' approach with professionals' support. The focus may be on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment of further barriers to attendance. • Use of the Checklist for Attendance Tracking and Support (CATS) with the family to agree personalised support/changes. • Planning small, achievable steps of progress with the CYP (TME target setting). • Planning steps of gradual reintegration back into school and/or alternative educational provision. • School referral to the Flexible Learning Team, for CYP experiencing medical needs, but only once STS and/or Integrated Disability Service (IDS) support has been sought.



<p>Complete an EBSNA additional support plan for the CYP.</p> <p>It is possible that after this early support, further assess, plan, do, review may not be needed.</p> <p>If required, review after one term.</p> <p>Engage in regular discussions with school's link Attendance Advisor (Warwickshire Attendance Service) to explore any initial concerns.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scheduling additional calming breaks. • Access to quieter spaces for breaktimes. • Nurture provision support. • Planning with the CYP to avoid burnout. <p>Update the EBSNA additional support plan for the CYP.</p> <p>If required, review after one further term.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accessing specialist support services such as CAMHS, RISE, Play Therapist. • Wider family-level support such as Respite, Child in Need, Child protection support. <p>At specialist support agree bespoke strategies for safeguarding the CYP's wellbeing. Please see the EBSNA Matrix of Support for inspiration. These ideas may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gradual, tailored steps to help the CYP return to the school environment. • Access to remote learning. • Augmentative technology support to enable to CYP to reconnect with school, for example AV1s. • A reintegration ladder, personalised to the CYP, with agreed review timescales. <p>Continue to update the EBSNA additional support plan.</p> <p>Warwickshire Attendance Service* (see below)</p> <p>Warwickshire Flexible Learning Team*(see below)</p> <p>If the level of support required is above SEN Support, then a referral for an Education, Health and Care Needs Assessment can be made, and school should lead on this. See here for more information.</p>
<p align="center">Please see the EBSNA Provision Matrix for further support ideas</p>		



Specialist Support

***Warwickshire Attendance Service:** If a school has provided significant support for a CYP with attendance issues, it can submit a Notification for Attendance Intervention (NAI) regardless of whether the CYP's attendance has reached the Persistent Absence (PA) threshold, for example 80%. The Attendance Adviser (AA) will review the case to decide if formal intervention should begin or if further support (between school, family and support agencies) is needed first. Our overarching aim is to foster collaborative partnerships between schools and families, ensuring that all interventions are grounded in empathy and a deep understanding of the individual challenges faced by each CYP.

***Warwickshire Flexible Learning Team (FLT):** Schools should contact FLT when a CYP has missed 15 days of school due to medical reasons, initiating the process by completing the Sickness Return Form and considering Section 19 support. For a referral to be appropriate, the CYP must have ongoing medical involvement, evidenced by a completed medical form from a GP or specialist, and a referral to CAMHS or a relevant medical service. Referrals for neurodiversity assessments alone are not sufficient. FLT may accept alternative evidence in some cases and encourages schools to seek clarification if needed. Schools must also provide a record of prior support and interventions.

FLT offers tailored support, including regular home visits by an Inclusion Mentor, and may also include access to online lessons, and attendance at FLT hubs. If appropriate, AV1 robots may be used to maintain school engagement. Exit from FLT support is guided by medical advice, with reintegration into school supported once the CYP is deemed fit to return.

