

EDUCATIONAL NEGLECT

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 could that look like?

This type of neglect would see parents/ carers failing to:

- provide stimulation to encourage learning in early years,
- provide education or identify provision to support learning for their child,
- to provide boundaries that support engagement in education & learning, and specifically for children enrolled at school
- engage in school meetings to address progress or attendance concerns,
- unable to provide substantiated reasons for absence from school, or for failing to be at school on time, leading to frequent or extended absence.
- engage in assessments, plans, and interventions to improve attendance and attainment.

What are the impacts on the child?

A child who does not receive a suitable education will not develop their personality, talents, physical and mental abilities to their fullest potential. The right to education is enshrined in human rights legislation, as recognition of its impact on the development of respect for all human rights and freedoms. A child therefore deprived of education will struggle to respect the natural environment or prepare for life or have an understanding of their role in participating and creating a free society of understanding, peace, tolerance, equality, and friendships of people.

What action can be taken?

Building strong relationships with families, listening to, and understanding and helping people to explore the reasons a child has a right to education, based on developing their personality, talents, physical and mental abilities (not just achieving exam results) can help parents/ carers to understand concerns about the need for a child to receive a full-time appropriate education.

Working together 2023 identifies that where a child is missing education, or persistently absent from school, or not in receipt of full-time education, or has experienced multiple suspensions and is at risk or has been permanently excluded, then there should be at the least a coordinated early help response. However educational neglect and other types of neglect or abuse may occur simultaneously. Each situation will therefore require careful consideration of the impact, severity, and duration of possible harm a child is experiencing. Professionals should consider the guidance for the threshold of need of the child and take the appropriate action. The [neglect screening tool](#) may be of assistance.

Where a parent/carers has expressed their intention to remove a child from school with a view to educating them at home, or where a child misses 10% or more of school (equivalent to 1 day or more a fortnight across a full school year) at minimum, coordinated early help approach should be taken with them by the school, local authority inclusion team and any other professionals involved with the family, to ensure that the parent/carers have considered what is in the best interest of each child. (based on Keeping Children Safe in Education 2023 and Working Together to improve school attendance 2024 guidance)

Systematic analysis of attendance information is very important, as it enables professionals to ask the right questions; is the absence each Monday related to what happens at home at the weekend, for example? Is it because the pupil has a lesson they really don't like on that day? Has anything happened that weekend that is a social media factor? Noticing the 'odd days' and acting quickly can prevent issues becoming embedded and help identify any safeguarding concerns early. Children may not have the language or understanding to tell someone they are experiencing abuse or neglect; they may express something is wrong through their behaviour. It is therefore important to look behind behaviour of an individual to see if there are concerns within the child's family life or outside of the home that require a safeguarding response to prevent or address the suffering of significant harm.