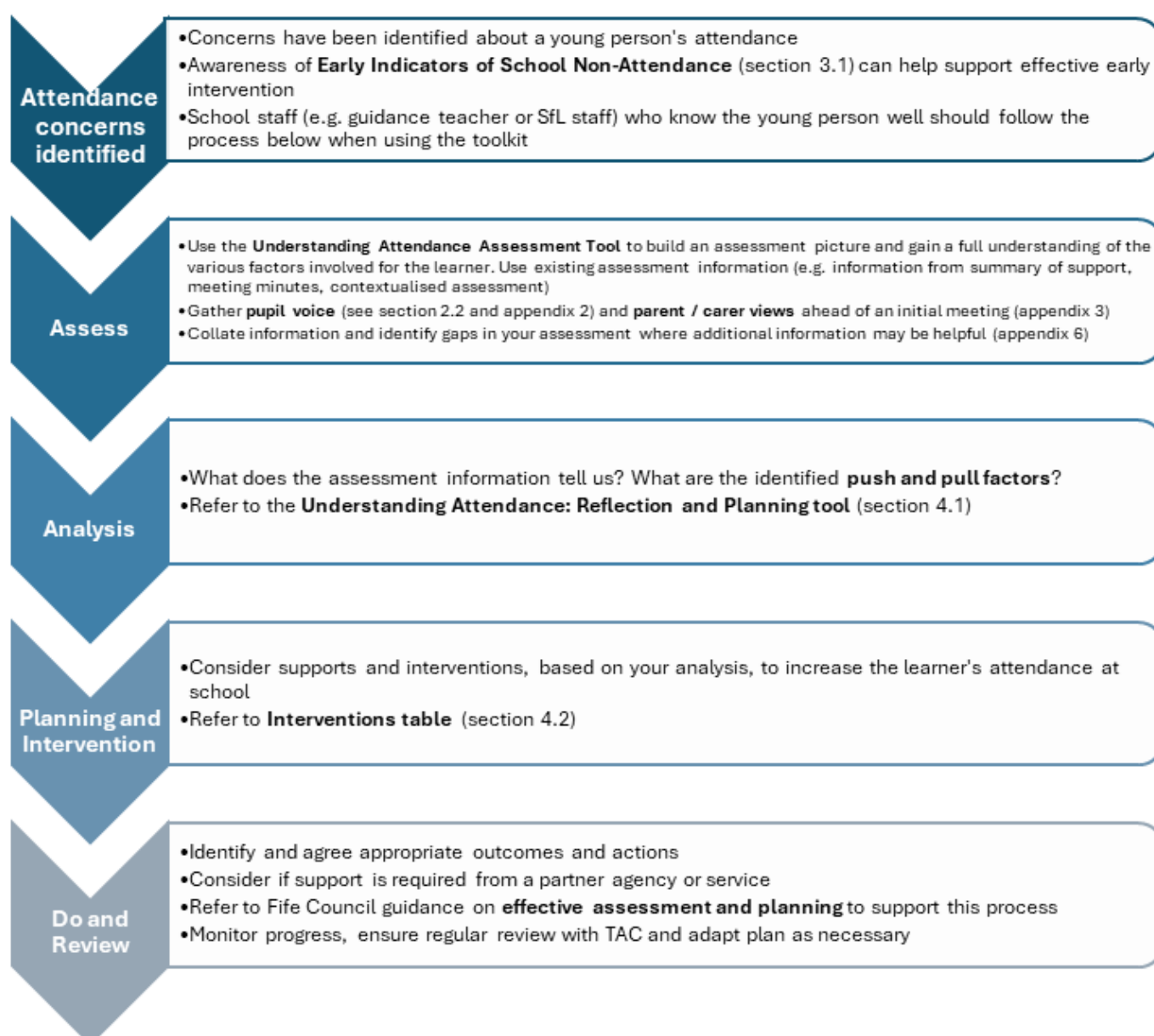


Understanding Attendance Assessment Tools

These tools have been extracted from Supporting Attendance: An assessment and intervention toolkit. They are designed to support school staff in assessing, planning for and reviewing learner needs associated with barriers to school attendance.

How to use the Toolkit:



Parent/ Carer Information Gathering for Secondary Learners

We understand that children and young people may miss school for various reasons. Sometimes this is related to their physical health, their mental well-being, or a range of other school / family related factors.

We would like to meet to talk about what is supporting your child to attend school and to gain a better understanding of the reasons why they haven't been able to attend. Parents and carers play a crucial role in this. We invite you to share your thoughts below which will help us know what to focus on when we meet. You might find it helpful to talk these through with your child.

Individual factors

These might be things like emotional wellbeing, additional support needs, friendships, self-image, physical health or their past experiences of school or learning.

What is helping your child to go to school?

What is making it difficult for your child to attend school?

Family / home factors

This might include any family changes, how they feel about being apart from you, your current relationship with your child, and how easy or difficult it is for you to support your child to attend school.

What is helping your child to go to school?

What is making it difficult for your child to attend school?

School factors

This might include relationships with staff or other pupils, how they feel about specific subjects, how they respond to tests, the move to secondary school, how much they feel part of school life, or how easy or difficult it is to come to school in the morning.

What is helping your child to go to school?

What is making it difficult for your child to attend school?

Please let us know if there is anything else you would like to talk about when we meet.

Guidance for adults to gather young people's views on school attendance

1. Early Intervention:

Use the form on the following pages to gather young people's views as soon as you are aware of any difficulties around attendance.

Examples may include:

- o Parents are reporting difficulties getting their child into school
- o A young person stops attending some of their classes
- o A drop in overall attendance

Some young people may require varying levels of scaffolding to answer the questions, and the form would be best completed in collaboration with a key adult who can help expand on / elicit further responses.

2. Be Curious:

As well as recording a young person's response, be curious about those responses and record additional information shared during your conversation.

3. Tailor questions:

Consider the stage of the young person's attendance journey and adapt questions to suit their context.

For example, if a young person has not been attending school for a prolonged period the questions may be more focused around concerns and worries around returning to school.

When tailoring the questions, explore the barriers identified in relation to current attendance. e.g., "I feel worried..."

Leaving the house

Going into the school building

Leaving the base

Going into specific locations

Or another tricky situation that you have identified.

Where there are blanks, add examples that are specific to your setting or learner. There are more tools and resources for gathering young people's views in the main body of the toolkit for you to explore.

My View on School Attendance

Name: _____ School: _____ Date: _____

It is important for everyone to know how you are feeling about school; in this form we want to know your views so that we can help make school the best place it can be for you.

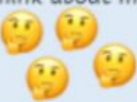
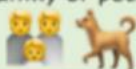
How do you feel about being in school?

What makes it this number?

What would help move the number up?

Look at the pictures below: put a tick ✓ next to the ones that are **true**, and a ✗ next to the ones that are **not true**

I feel worried  ☐	I worry about leaving my parents/carers to go to school  ☐	I can do things if I really try  ☐	I need help with my learning  ☐	People don't listen or believe me  ☐
I don't like reading aloud  ☐	There are people who help me at school  ☐	I feel mixed up  ☐	I prefer to spend time doing fun stuff at home  ☐	I believe people care about me at school  ☐
I don't like some teachers  ☐	Some children are mean to me  ☐	I worry about getting unwell  ☐	I think things will get better  ☐	I would rather spend time on my games or watch TV  ☐
School is too noisy or busy  ☐	I feel embarrassed  ☐	I have friends at school  ☐	I don't understand what the teacher is saying  ☐	I would rather be at home  ☐

I worry about tests 	I feel like I belong at my school 	My family need me to be at home 	I worry about seeing my classmates 	I worry that my family will become unwell 
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I worry about what people think about me 	I don't like breaktimes 	People listen to me at school 	I feel sad 	I don't know how to make friends 
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I feel lonely 	I don't like working in a group 	I want to go to school 	I worry about schoolwork 	I feel safe when I am at school 
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I am a good learner 	I prefer to spend time with my family or pets 	I don't like changes to routine 	I worry about people getting too close to me 	I feel my head is too full 
☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Additional information:

Tell us a little more about school locations, subjects and relationships 

-  Easy to attend
-  Sometimes difficult
-  Difficult to attend

School Locations			
Assembly			
Corridors			
Lunch time			
Gym Hall			
Playground			
Break time			
In class			
Subjects			
English			
Maths			
Relationships (Key staff and peers)			
Learning			
Knowing what my teacher has asked me to do			

Knowing the things I need to do my work (e.g. pencil, pen, jotter...)			
Working in groups			
When I get something wrong			

What makes these things green, amber or red?

Locations/ Subjects/ Relationships/ learning	Reason



What do you or others do currently that helps you get to school?

What might help?

	😊	☹️
Spaces for Learning		
Having a separate desk in the class		
Working in groups		
Working on my own		
Having a separate area I can access		
Places for regulation		
Having a safe space to go to when I am overwhelmed		
Having a place to go to during break and lunch times		
Things that help me		
Using visuals and symbols		
Checklists to remind me what I may need for my work		
Having things printed out so I don't need to copy from the board		
Seeing examples of completed work so I know what to do		

What others can do to support me:		
Having a check in with a safe adult to say how I am feeling		
Breaking tasks into small stages so I know what steps need to be done		
When someone helps me with a task		
Help me remember what I have learned before and how this will help with new work		
When I get feedback on how well I am doing		
Using ICT in class to reduce writing		
Extra time to complete my classwork		
Working as a pair		

Below are more tools and resources for gathering young people's views for you to explore.

Learner tool	Location
Generic Tools	
Tools for Gathering the Views of Learners	Highland Educational Psychology Service Tools for gathering the views of children and young people – Highland Council Psychological Service
Person-Centred Planning (PCP) tools	SEND Person Centred Planning tool Person-Centered Thinking Tools - Helen Sanderson Associates
Solution-focussed framework	NSPCC Solution-focused practice toolkit
Pupil Voice Framework (based on Lundy model) Learner Feedback form (based on Lundy model)	OneNote Assessment and Planning > Good meeting practice > Additional Resources Assessment and Planning Guidance for Additional Support and Wellbeing Needs Feb 2023 This section also contains examples of solution focussed questions
Attendance Specific	
West Sussex Educational Psychology Service: Emotionally Based Avoidance	Emotionally Based School Avoidance West Sussex Services for Schools
Neurodivergence and Attendance	
Barriers to Education – Young Person Voice Tools	Young Person Voice Tools - Barriers to Education

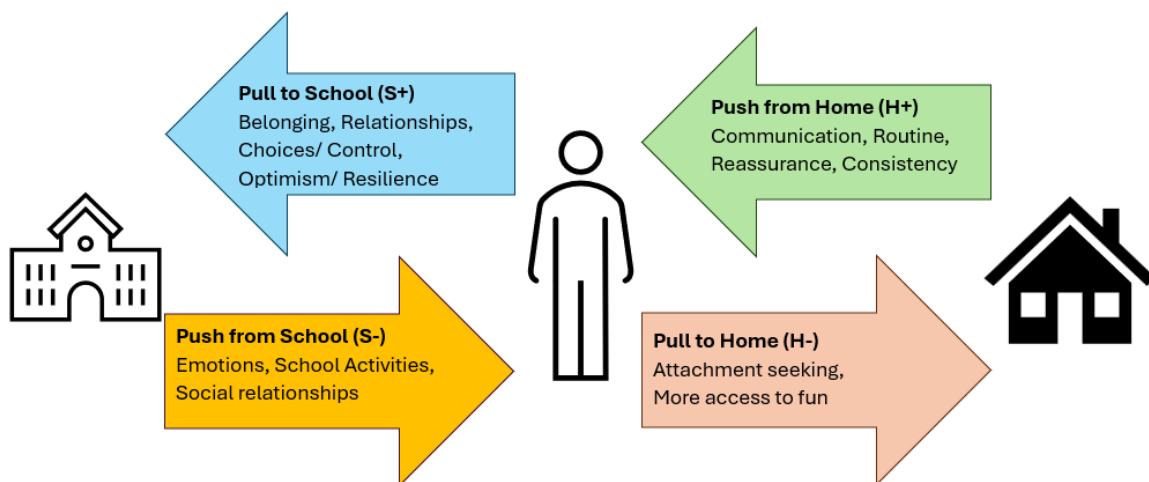
Understanding Attendance Assessment Tool

The Understanding Attendance Assessment Tool will help to build a holistic assessment picture of supports and the barriers to a learner's school attendance. Information should be gathered through collaboration with the learner, key staff members and parents.

The Understanding Attendance Assessment Tool can be used to collate information on an ongoing basis. Populating the tool may involve initial information gathering from the learner and parent before meeting together to agree the relevant information to include. It is not necessary to complete each box, nor to repeat information if it applies in the same way in different boxes; however, consideration should be given to where there are gaps in assessment information.

Within each box, decide together if the factor:

- Pulls the learner towards school (**Pull S +**)
- Pushes the learner positively away from home, and into school (**Push H +**)
- Pushes the learner away from school (**Push S -**)
- Pulls the learner towards being at home, rather than in school (**Pull H -**)



You may decide that the factor involves elements of both 'push' and 'pull'. Highlight the relevant aspects and add any additional information.

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Understanding attendance assessment tool

Name:	Stage:	School:	Completed with:	Date:
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Review date:

Individual factors				Family/home factors				School factors			
Emotional wellbeing / mental health				Care circumstances (e.g. at home, foster care)				Relationships with peers			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Past experiences (e.g., positive experience of school, traumatic events, move school, etc.)				Family experiences / change (e.g. separation, loss & bereavement)				Relationships with staff			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -

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Individual factors				Family/home factors				School factors			
ASN (e.g., Neurodivergent)				Relationships in the home				Specific subjects / lessons			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Making and sustaining friendships				Separation / being apart from parents or carers				Response to academic demands / pressure incl. exams assessments			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Self-image				Current family circumstances (e.g. level of stress, physical and mental health)				Primary / secondary transition			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -

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Individual factors				Family/home factors				School factors			
Learning / appropriate curriculum				Parent/ carer work circumstances (e.g. work demands, shift work, working from home, have had to give up work, not in work)				Behaviours in class (own or others)			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Motivation and mindset				Family resources to support attendance and/or engagement in school learning				School ethos (e.g., relationships, sense of belonging, connectedness/community)			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Physical health				Family support for learner's resilience to attend (e.g., parents' own experiences and beliefs)				Transition to school in morning			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -

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Understanding Attendance: Reflection and Planning Tool

This tool can be used to support the analysis of the 'Understanding attendance assessment tool' and identify next steps and interventions.				
	Pull to school (Increase factors which pulls the learner towards school) Pull S +	Push from Home (Increase factors which push the learner positively away from home, and into school) Push H +	Push from School (Reduce factors which pushes the learner away from school) Push S -	Pull to Home (Reduce factors which pull the learner towards being at home, rather than in school) Pull H -
Individual	How can we build on the learner's identified strengths/interests/hopes for the future to make attendance feel purposeful and rewarding? How can we strengthen the learner's connections with trusted adults and peers to foster a sense of belonging that encourages regular attendance? Does the learner feel understood, celebrated and valued?	What support is needed to help the learner feel emotionally safe and understood? How are we supporting the learner to develop their resilience and copng strategies? How is this communicated to the adults supporting the learner? How can we ensure the learner feels heard and sees their views reflected in their education planning, building their sense of inclusion and ownership?	How is the learner supported to understand and manage difficult emotions that affect their attendance? When school feels challenging, what supports help the learner build confidence, feel a sense of control, and access regular opportunities to pause and regulate? How is the learner supported to explore their social and communication preferences in ways that reduce stress and affirm identity?	How is the learner's connection to home acknowledged and supported throughout the school day? If the learner has caring responsibilities, what supports are in place to help them engage meaningfully in learning while balancing their role as a young carer?
Family	Is there a need for additional agencies and support for the	What home-based routines and strategies can we	How can we encourage a positive narrative around	How can we build the learner's confidence to take

	family to manage the transition into school? For example, school buddies, Includem, Barnardo's, wider friends and family.	support or suggest to help the learner feel emotionally and physically ready to transition into the school day - such as consistent sleep habits, co-regulation practices, or positive end-of-day plans? How can the learner's connection to home be supported during their day at school?	school attendance that feels meaningful to learners and their families? Would any of our families benefit from additional information and support e.g., Access Fife Therapy courses, Flourish, etc.?	part in activities away from home in a way that feels manageable? If the learner finds separation from their caregiver difficult, how can the caregiver be supported to ease this transition? Is there scope to shift enjoyable or connecting activities with caregivers to times outside the school day? Can home-based learning be used during the school day as a bridge to re-engagement, rather than a replacement for school?
School	How do learners with decreased attendance know that the school has a culture where all learners are understood, celebrated and valued? How can we foster strong, trusting relationships with key adults for this learner? How can we maintain meaningful connection with	In what ways does the school environment offer the learner meaningful opportunities to experience success — academically, socially, or personally? Are there regular chances for the learner to engage in activities that feel relevant, motivating, and aligned with their interests or strengths?	What aspects of the school environment may need reviewing to reduce barriers to attendance, and how can tools like CIRCLE guide this process? What school community-based supports (e.g. buddies, home liaison) are in place to strengthen the learner's sense of belonging and connection?	How do learners with decreased attendance know that the school has a culture where all learners are understood, celebrated and valued? How can we foster strong, trusting relationships with key adults for this learner? How can we maintain meaningful connection with

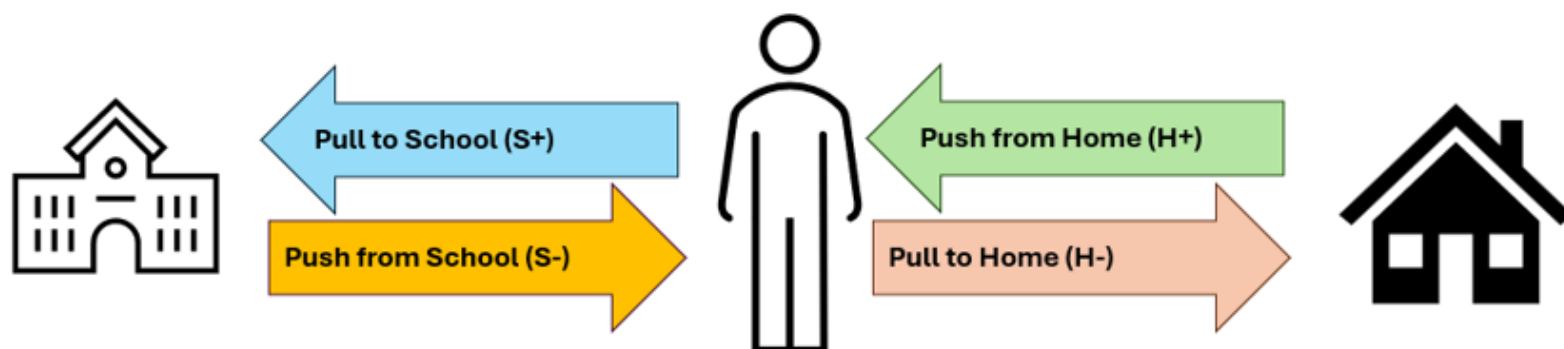
	learners when they are not physically present in school? How can we increase positive aspects of school? For example, extracurricular and social experiences.	How does the learner know that they are kept in mind by key school adults throughout the day?	What does a safe space look like for this learner, and how are they supported to access it when needed? How is the learner's return to class or school thoughtfully planned after missed lessons — with care, flexibility, and connection? How are social opportunities throughout the day used to build peer relationships in ways that feel safe and affirming for the learner? Does the learner's timetable offer the learner regular experiences of success, and is there flexibility to adapt it when needed? How do key adults in school stay attuned to the learner's needs and actively build trust and connection?	learners when they are not physically present in school? What signals or routines help the learner feel that they matter - even during transitions, unstructured times, or when things aren't going well? How can we increase positive aspects of school? For example, extracurricular and social experiences. How are we making learning feel relevant, motivating, and achievable for the learner?

Enhance or Increase **Pull to School** Factors:

- A sense of belonging
- Friendships and peer relationships
- Relationships with adults at school, who are viewed as helpful, trustworthy or supportive
- Confidence in learning ability
- A sense of purpose or ambition to achieve
- The ability to make choices and have some control
- A sense of optimism and belief things can change

Enhance or Increase **Push from Home** Factors:

- Regular, clear and consistent communication between school and home
- Consistent routines in place at home that support transition to school; including sleep, mealtimes and daily living/ personal care, goodbye and pick-up routines
- Verbal and physical (pictures, texts, transition objects) reassurance of connection with family while at school
- Consistency of language use and scripts at home and at school to discuss school attendance and all push and pull factors



Reduce or provide coping strategies for **Push from School** Factors:

- Tricky **emotions** associated with school; feeling anxious, worried, lonely, confused, overwhelmed, helpless or sad.
- Finding some **school activities** difficult. This could include learning, homework or tests; the physical and sensory environment; some teachers or teaching styles; some subjects or parts of the school day
- Finding some **social relationships** in school difficult. This could include finding it difficult to make or keep friends; not liking any public speaking, such as reading in class; being bullied; feeling looked at or judged

Minimise **Pull to home** factors during school times, but can consider increasing **Pull to home** opportunities evenings, weekends or holidays

A need to have increased **attachment** with parent(s)/ carer(s)

- Not wanting to be away from (a) parent(s)
- Worrying about family or pets when not with them
- A need to care for a family member, or a feeling of that need

Access to **fun** activities during "school time" at home, or in the community, that would not be available at school.

- Access to devices or screens
- Access to favourite toys, games, music or books
- Exciting or enjoyable activities with parents/ relatives/ friends

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Interventions

The table below outlines common interventions to consider when creating a plan to increase the learner’s attendance at school. Collaborative problem solving is key when considering which interventions will best meet the learner’s underlying needs and address barriers to attendance at individual, home and school levels.

Theme	Intervention	Additional information
Learner voice and relationships with staff	Person Centred Planning	Tools such as a Giftedness Poster, PATH and MAP can be useful. For pupils who struggle to verbalise the barriers to attendance, a ‘Talking Mat’ or ‘School wellbeing cards’ may be useful. See Appendix 1 of Toolkit / link with Educational Psychologist (EP) for more information.
	Identify at least one key adult in school for a secure, trusting relationship	
	Emotion check-ins at regular points through the week/day	
	Regular staff check-ins / links with learner when out with school (e.g. home visit, Teams call, email)	
Using learner’s strengths	Consideration of using interests / motivators in school	

	Responsibility jobs, specific roles in school	
	Links with community opportunities to build motivation for future roles	
Social supports	Buddies / peer supporters	
	Encourage into structured social situations e.g. clubs and activities	
	Small group intervention on targeted social skills	
	Use of Cool in School online resource	Cool in School – A site about keeping your cool in school
	Maintain a sense of belonging via peer links (e.g. Seesaw, Teams, online, peer activities out with school)	
Structure of school day	Soft start / breakfast club	
	Alternative start and finish times from school	
	Alternative break and lunch plans	
	Timeout card	
	Identified safe spaces	
	Early pass from class	

	Preventative sensory breaks or regulating opportunities built into day	
	Option to access learning out with main school building	
	Agreed Reduced Attendance / Flexi Arrangements	See guidance on intranet. ARA agreements can be considered as a short-term intervention, in combination with addressing wider underlying needs and barriers.
Teaching and learning	Timetable review to rate subjects and match to teacher approach where appropriate	
	Differentiate curriculum (learning approaches in class)	
	Adapted timetable (wider achievement, planned time out of class)	
	Online learning offer	E.g. access to work on Teams page Or online learning offer from E-Sgoil Home Page e-Sgoil
Learner Emotional Wellbeing strategies	Mindfulness exercises	Info available on Moodcafe Mood Cafe For young people
	Support learner to understand anxiety cycle and / or link between thoughts, feelings and behaviour	See link EP for 'Anxiety is Normal Resource Pack'

		Courses available on Access Therapies Fife website Home - Access Therapies Fife NHS
	Individualised or small group targeted intervention for emotional wellbeing/ emotional literacy	E.g. Kitbag group, Energy Accounting
	De-sensitisation approach to reduce fears, where aspects of school causing anxiety are identified and gradually managed in a structured plan.	E.g. visits after school, link with one member of staff initially, etc. (Link further with Educational Psychologist for more information on de-sensitisation)
Home	Agreed routine for separation from parent	May be supported by a social story depending on age and stage of learner
	'Keeping in mind' object from parent e.g. a note, something which reminds learner of them	
	Support family to understand learner's needs, including any anxiety	Courses available on Access Therapies Fife website Home - Access Therapies Fife NHS

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Understanding Attendance Assessment Tool Worked Example

Name: Carol McKay Stage: S2 School: High school Completed with: Alex Smith, Guidance Date: 25/05/25

Review date:

Individual factors				Family/home factors				School factors			
Emotional wellbeing / mental health				Care circumstances (e.g. at home, foster care)				Relationships with peers			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Can have anxiety about new experiences and feels more comfortable at home				Recent return to mum’s care and may feel anxious about being removed again				No difficulties			
Past experiences (e.g., positive experience of school, traumatic events, move school, etc.)				Family experiences / change (e.g. separation, loss & bereavement)				Relationships with staff			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Has had a change of high school. Moved here in November								Good relationships with some teachers, PSO and guidance			
ASN (e.g., Neurodiversity)				Relationship in the home				Specific subjects / lessons			

Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Push S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Diagnosis of autism, finds home less demanding for social and sensory reasons				Good, nurturing relationship. Mum supportive of school attendance				Keen to access drama and music. Knows needs			
Making and sustaining friendships				Separation / being apart from parents / carer				Response to academic demands / pressure incl. exams assessments			
Push S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Push H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Two friends but finds it hard to make new links				Wants to be close to mum				Feels anxious due to missed learning			
Self-image				Current family circumstances (e.g. level of stress, physical and mental health)				Primary / secondary transition			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
				No current stressors. Supportive of school							
Learning / appropriate curriculum				Parent/ carer work circumstances (e.g. work demands, shift work, working from home, have had to give up work, not in work)				Behaviours in class (own or others)			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Finds multiple instructions difficult to follow. Variable across classes				Flexibility in day to support Carol for morning routine and getting to school							

Motivation and mindset				Family resources to support attendance and/or engagement in school learning				School ethos (e.g., relationships, sense of belonging, connectedness/community)			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
Currently not motivated to attend school and feels interventions won't help				Mum helping Carol with learning at home so can keep up with curriculum				Doesn't feel part of or connected to X high school			
Physical health				Family support for learner's resilience to attend (e.g., parents' own experiences and beliefs)				Transition to school in morning			
Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -	Pull S +	Push H +	Push S -	Pull H -
				Mum trying to engage Carol in wider community activities to build confidence				Finds bus busy and noisy			

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Analysis and Planning

Guidance arranged a meeting with mum and Carol to consider the assessment and plan next steps. The actions would be included in the Child's Plan. The actions they agreed on were:

Individual factors: - For the Guidance teacher to ask EP for information on anxiety to send through to mum and Carol - For Carol to consider an online anxiety course through Access Therapies Fife - For Guidance to ensure the Summary of Support is up to date with information and resend to staff to support Carol's processing of instructions and awareness that she needs to use headphones to help with her sensory sensitivities	Who? AS -GT CM -Learner / MM -Parent AS -GT	By when? 10/6/25 6/6/25 17/6/25
Home factors: - For Mum to link with SW to let them know Carol's anxieties about being removed to foster care again - Mum to write a note to Carol each morning that she can keep in her bag to help with Carol's feelings of anxiety about being apart - Mum to continue to encourage Carol to try new activities and clubs outside school	MM- Parent MM - Parent MM - Parent	10/6/25 6/6/25 6/6/25
School factors: - Guidance to ensure all class learning is uploaded on Teams so Carol can access it. Carol can meet with English and Maths teachers after school to go over recent learning before coming back into class - Guidance to take Carol along to the drama club to help build her connectedness to school and give her a wider peer group - Review meeting to be held in 4 weeks (29/6/25, at 2pm)	AS - GT AS – GT	17/6/25 10/6/25

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