**The EBSA Pastoral Support Programme**

**Putting Children First**



**September 2021**

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**Purpose of the EBSA PSP**

The Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Pastoral Support Programme (PSP) is a pathway of support for children who are missing school because of anxiety that is either rooted in or exacerbated by the school environment. It is underpinned by the principle that 'kids do well if they can[[1]](#footnote-1) and invites professionals to be curious about the underlying causes of school avoidance as well as an individual's strengths and resources and how to harness these.

Pupils who are regularly absent are more likely than others to underperform and to leave school with few or no qualifications. They are more likely to be unemployed, to experience social isolation, to suffer mental illness and to become homeless. Poor attendance is also correlated with vulnerability, exploitation and crime. The EBSA PSP is designed to support schools in intervening early and effectively to reduce these risks and promote positive outcomes.

**PSP Preparation: ATTEND Assessment**

The EBSA PSP dovetails with the ATTEND resource from Brighton & Hove EPS. LCC has provided all Lincolnshire schools with a copy of this evidence-based approach to what we know is a growing issue facing schools and families. The resource includes questionnaires for pupil, parent/carer and lead professional.

These must be completed prior to the initial PSP meeting and will enable professionals to identify what it is about going to school that the avoidant pupil is finding most difficult. They are best completed alongside child and family, as part of a discussion, and this may need to take place outside of school. It may also be necessary to build the relationship with family through informal check-ins before completing the assessment since the questions touch on sensitive and personal areas. The professional form can only be completed after the pupil and parent one and is essentially as way of deriving a formulation – or hypotheses – from that feedback. This will then form the basis of a graduated approach.

**Devising the PSP**

To arrive at an EBSA PSP support plan, SENCOs are advised to match up the identified issues (reference parent/carer and pupil forms) with the 'Support Strategies' outlined within the ATTEND framework, as follows:

* Anxiety
* Health & Wellbeing
* Sensory Factors
* Social Factors
* Academic Factors
* Factors Relating to Change
* Family Factors
* Other Factors
* Maintenance/secondary factors

LCC's Inclusion Toolkit should also inform planning with communication and interaction and social emotional and mental health sections particularly appropriate.

The voice of pupil and family need to be central to the plan, which must be person centred and devised collaboratively. If the pupil is unable or unwilling to engage, or indeed the family, or both, there should still be a plan: this will outline how the relationship will be rebuilt as the first, essential step towards reintegration.

**Sharing the plan to ensure a consistent approach**

The PSP will undoubtedly include support strategies that all staff, including non-teaching, need to know about. For example, a barrier to attendance can be fear of being in trouble for poor attendance and missing work (an EBSA 'maintenance factor'). Staff need to adopt a consistent approach towards welcoming avoidant pupils back into class without focussing on missing work or the widened learning gap or the need for catch-up. **Sharing the PSP with all teachers, or at least key strategies from it, perhaps through a pen portrait, is therefore of critical importance.**

**Reduced timetables and the PSP**

Any pupil to be placed on a reduced timetable, defined as less than full-time education in school, should have this exceptional measure planned within a PSP process.

In this way, parents/carers are consulted and able to consent (a legal requirement) and arrangements for review are transparent. Where a pupil is looked after or has a statutory SEND plan, then the Local Authority Virtual School and/or relevant SEND caseworker must be invited to the PSP meeting alongside other relevant professionals. The arrangement must also be logged on LCC's data exchange. It can be a good option for this cohort of children and young people, enabling a phased return to full-time attendance at a pace that doesn't overwhelm or compromise any small steps of progress made.

**Flexi-Schooling**

This can be a positive, longer term option for pupils who are simply exhausted by full-time attendance in school, perhaps because of the effort required to manage the sensory environment or the social and emotional challenges if they are neuro-divergent. Parents/carers may request, for example, a four day week with the fifth working at home – so that the education provided remains full-time, but differentiated. Headteachers do not need medical evidence or a diagnosis to agree such an arrangement, instead using their professional judgement to C code the absence.

**EBSA PSP Funding**

As with the 'Behaviour Ladder' PSP, SENCOs are encouraged to submit their completed plan to [PRT@lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:PRT@lincolnshire.gov.uk) for funding of up to 1k to support activities or resources that form part of the plan, such as the establishment of a bespoke lunchtime club which enhances safety and strengthens relationships, or an activity outside of school which promotes active participation within the community.

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| **EBSA Pastoral Support Programme** |

Pupil:

Pupil’s date of birth:

Date of initial meeting:

Attendees:

|  |  |
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| **Description of the current situation**  **Historic % attendance and lateness rates (create a timeline if helpful)**  **Concerns:**  **Strengths:** | |
| **What are we worried about?**  *List all of the contributing factors, using ATTEND codes A1 – M8.* | |
| **Pupil Views** (summary of ATTEND) | **Parent Views** (summary of ATTEND) |
| **Goals**  Up to 3 targets can be agreed, identified as important by pupil and family, rather than determined by professionals.  Example:  Target 1: James will attend school for one preferred lesson per day (e.g. IT, resistant materials)  Rating: 1 2 **(B)** 3 4 5 6 **(E)** 7 8 9 10  Descriptor of **Baseline** level:  2: James is not attending any lessons but he is speaking to his key worker on the phone once per week.  **Expected** Level  5: James believes he will be able to attend a lesson a day because he has not experienced any issues in these lessons and has a good relationship with the teachers.   |  | | --- | | **Target 1** | |  | | Rating | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | Descriptor of baseline level: | |  | | Descriptor of expected level: | |  | | Descriptor of level achieved (completed at reviews): | | 6 weeks:  12 weeks: |  |  | | --- | | **Target 2** | |  | | Rating | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | Descriptor of baseline level: | |  | | Descriptor of expected level: | |  | | Descriptor of level achieved (completed at reviews): | | 6 weeks:  12 weeks: |  |  | | --- | | **Target 3** | |  | | Rating | | 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 | | Descriptor of baseline level: | |  | | Descriptor of expected level: | |  | | Descriptor of level achieved (completed at reviews): | | 6 weeks:  12 weeks: | | |

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| **Action Plan**  **(Complete at initial PSP meeting – aim to create a climate in which goals can be achieved by reducing stressors)**  Note: Funding of 1k per EBSA PSP is available from [PRT@Lincolnshire.gov.uk](mailto:PRT@Lincolnshire.gov.uk) to enable purchase of resources to support this plan. Submit completed PSP with costed items/activities identified. | | |
| **Code** | **Support Strategy** | **Responsible**  **(Family/school/agency)** |
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| I give permission for a mental health record to be opened in the event that Healthy Minds Lincolnshire or Mental Health Support Teams are invited to a review meeting.  I understand that this will be stored on a secure clinical system and will be accessed within GDPR guidelines.  Parent signature…………………………………………….. Date…………………. | | |

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| --- | --- |
| **Action Plan 6 week Review**  After scoring the targets (6 weeks achieved descriptor) evaluate the impact of the support plan and adjust if targets have not been achieved. | |
| **Date and time:** | |
| **Healthy Minds/MHST/CAMHS Practitioner:** | |
| **Changes to Support Strategy** | **Responsible**  **(Family/school/agency)** |
| 1. Annotate the support strategies on p9 (Continue/change/stop) 2. Populate this with space with any additional strategies |  |

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| **Action Plan 12 week Review**  After scoring the targets (12 weeks achieved descriptor) evaluate the impact of the PSP and agree next steps. |
| **Date and time:** |
| 1. Set three new goals and begin another cycle of graduated approach, as above. 2. Agree the long term accommodations that will enable progress to be sustained and capture these in a pen profile. 3. Via Ask SALL and with parental consent, book an EBSA consultation for a multi-disciplinary perspective on the appropriate next steps (complete section below). |
| Summarise impact of reviewed action plan and ongoing issues for consideration at EBSA consultation. Submit the whole EBSA PSP and ATTEND forms to Ask SALL for sharing with panel in advance, along with medical needs referral. |
|  |
| I consent to the school SENCO sharing information about my child and this reviewed PSP at EBSA consultation:  Parent/Carer: ……………………………………………………. Date…………………. |

1. Greene, R. (2008) Lost at School. Scribner. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)