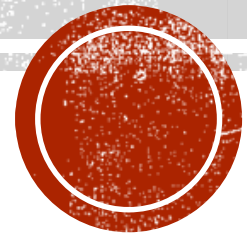


**SCHOOL ABSENCE &
EMOTIONAL WELLBEING AND MENTAL HEALTH —
WORKING TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE THE BEST
OUTCOME FOR THE CHILD**

Gary Rose-Thompson



THE SUFFOLK FAMILY FOCUS EDUCATION ATTENDANCE SERVICE

What is our Core Offer ?

- Partnership working – parent/carers/Schools/agencies
- Supportive role – we want your children to achieve their potential
- Co-produced plans - to make sustainable improvements



FIRST CONTACT SCHOOL

- Act Early
- Discuss the issues with a member of staff
- Seek 'Reasonable Adjustments'
- work in partnership
- discuss what the school can and can not achieve.
- Who else can help.
- agree a Co-Produced plan that all sign up to.



WHO ELSE CAN HELP

- Early Help Teams
- Health & Wellbeing services
- SEND Family Services
- SENDIASS
- Suffolk Family focus Education Attendance Service (Educational Welfare officer, EWO)



SUFFOLK FAMILY FOCUS EDUCATION ATTENDANCE SERVICE

Contact with the SFF Education Attendance service

If the school has an allocated EWO

- Ask for their name and contact details
- Make contact with them and discuss the issue
- Request a meeting with them and the school to find a way forward.

If the school does not have an allocated EWO

- If your child's school doesn't have an EWO and you feel you would like additional support and guidance contact

Schoolattendance@suffolk.gov.uk



WHEN THINGS START TO NOT WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD OR CHILDREN

- There is strong evidence that school attendance is linked to attainment outcomes .
- English law is linked to the parents/carers responsibility to get the children they are responsible for, to attend school.
- The decision to authorise or mark as an unauthorised absence is the Headteachers Educational establishments and the Local authority has to follow the legal processes to ensure that all children attend school.



WHEN THINGS START TO NOT WORK FOR YOU AND YOUR CHILD OR CHILDREN

- **However each case is considered on its own merits and the Suffolk Family Focus attendance service looks to work in partnership with the parents and carers and the school to achieve the best outcomes for the child.**



WHEN A CHILD IS UNWELL

- Schools should advise parents to notify them on the first day the child is unable to attend due to illness.
- Most illness is short term and are over with very quickly
- Where the illness is long term or chronic especially where there are wellbeing issues then their needs to be an early meeting with the school when it is first identified to create a plan as to how the school and the parent/carers will deal with this health issue to ensure the child can attend school as much as possible.
- The school should advise the parent/carer what they need to do via health and wellbeing services to provide the school with medical evidence to state that the child is unfit for school or what schooling the child can achieve. GP's may charge for this.
- The school will normally require medical evidence for protracted or long term school absences
- Schools should authorise absences due to illness unless they have genuine cause for concern about the veracity of an illness.



WHEN A CHILD IS UNWELL

Medical Evidence

- If the authenticity of illness is in doubt, schools can request parents to provide medical evidence to support illness.
- Schools can record the absence as unauthorised if they are not satisfied with the authenticity of the illness but should advise parents of their intention to do so.
- Schools are advised not to request medical evidence unnecessarily. Medical evidence can take the form of prescriptions, appointment cards, etc. rather than doctors' notes.



WORKING TOGETHER

- Health and Welbeing issues are complex.
- There are sometimes no one answer to the solutions
- Differing views as to how the problem can be solved as rule are common.

- The most important area is that all parties engage and talk to each other including the child as their voice must not be lost in the issue.



THANK YOU

Questions

