Welcome, the webcast will start shortly.

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Effective Plans

Delivered by the Attendance Team

Effective Planning to address Pupil Absence

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Netiquette

Please:

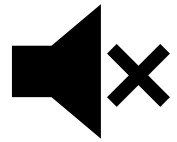
- Switch off your camera

- Mute your mic

- Raise your hand if you want to speak

- Use the CHAT facility to connect

- Respect confidentiality



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Aim: To enable Attendance Leads to develop their skills and knowledge in order to develop high quality plans that enable children to access a suitable and full-time education based on their individual needs.

Objectives:

To identify and explain what good practice looks like in line with research

To be able to explain the elements of an effective plan to return a child to a suitable, full-time education.

To be able to undertake a full and holistic assessment of need and develop individualised plans in response to identified need.

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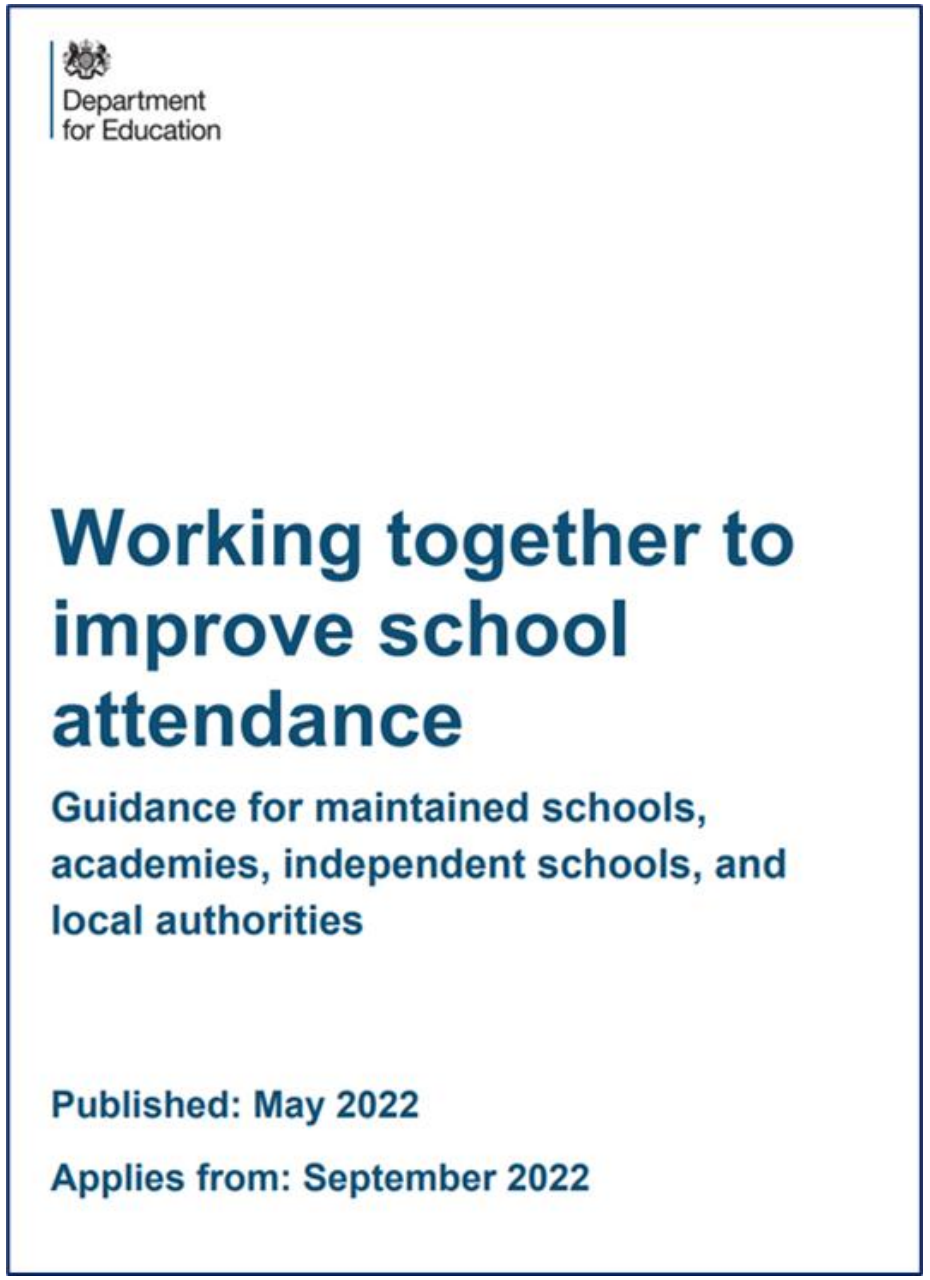

Where a pattern of absence is at risk of becoming, or becomes, problematic schools should draw on these relationships and listen to and understand the barriers to attendance the pupil or family is experiencing. In doing so, schools should take into consideration the sensitivity of some of the reasons for absence and understand the importance of school as a place of safety and support rather than reaching immediately for punitive approaches.

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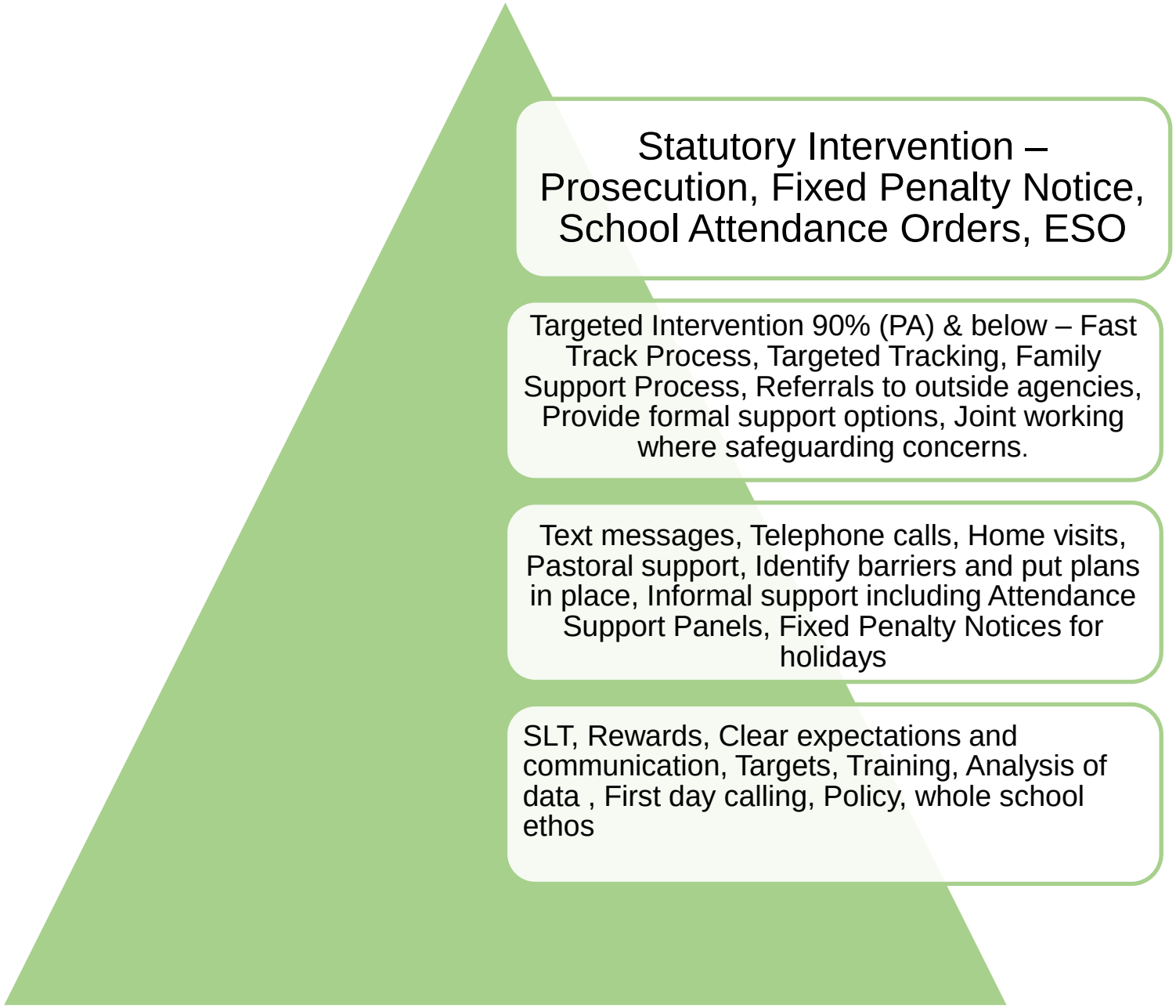

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‘It’s about working out what is needed to break down the barriers’

In schools that are systematically removing barriers to attendance, pupils’ anxieties are not dismissed but are sensitively analysed.

Recognise parental anxieties but sensitively challenge them - ‘listen, understand, empathise and support – but do not tolerate’

Ofsted
raising standards
improving lives

Research and analysis

Securing good attendance and tackling persistent absence

Published 7 February 2022

The most effective schools go out of their way to make sure that they notice the pupils who are often not there and persist with them.

‘Hard to reach’ families become reconceptualised as ‘too easy to ignore’, and therefore the ones who need the most attention.

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Communicating with parents

- Building positive and honest working relationships – overt messages about attendance, being consistently clear about expectations.
- Having high expectations for all pupils - ‘Sometimes it’s about making sure parents understand it’s the child’s right to attend, not their right to keep their child at home’.
- ‘80%; that’s good right?’ Challenging misconceptions about what good attendance is.
- Tenacity - ‘It’s about parents knowing that we are not going to let go.’
- Raising expectations and celebrating good attendance, improvements in attendance and achievement.

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Communication with Pupils

- SLT having a positive presence, communicating clearly that leaders want them to be in school
- Setting the tone – a positive greeting for children at start of the school day, *not 'someone barking at them about uniform or being late'.*
- Noticing when a pupil who was often absent was there – greeting them and mentioning something positive about the following day
- Helping the pupils to understand why attendance at school is important.
- Raising expectations and celebrating good attendance, improvements in attendance and achievement.

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Some common problems……

Individual staff working hard to try to improve pupils' attendance but with negligible impact

Using part-time timetables, usually for pupils with SEND or behavioural difficulties, which are not well planned, not tracked and/or not time-limited

A lack of urgency about when to intervene or challenge, for example not contacting parents about attendance concerns until attendance drops below 90%

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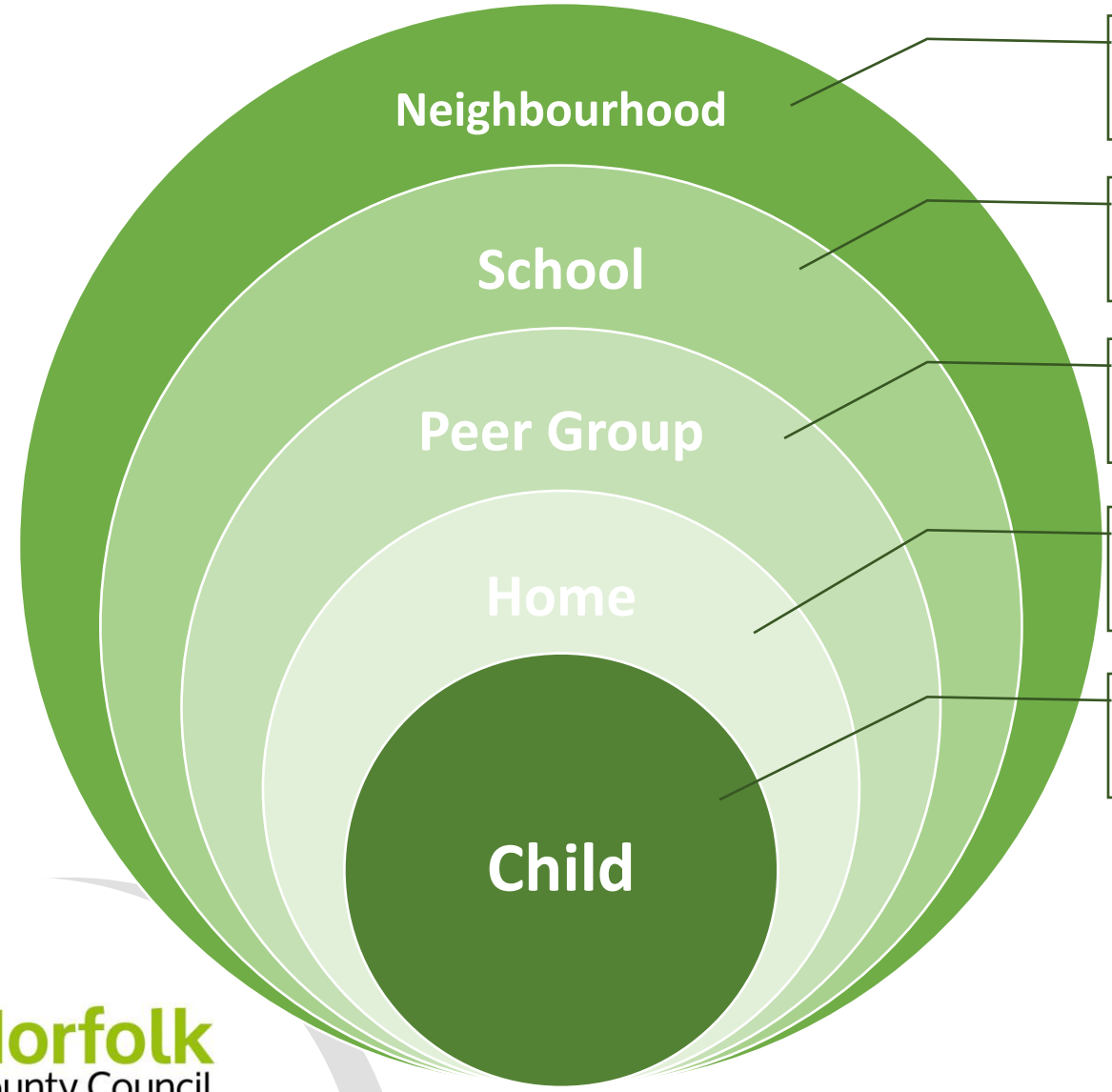
Context



Possible barriers to attendance

- Lack of transport
- Transition
- Bullying
- Unemployment
- Illness

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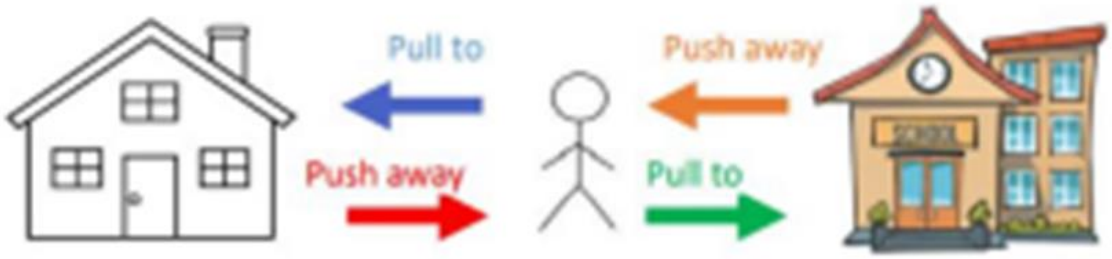
Push and Pull Factors

- Parental illness
- Separation anxiety

- Bullying/difficult peer relationships
- Difficulty accessing learning

Risk factors



What push and pull factors do you see?

- Parent/carer wants child to attend school

- Good relationship with Head of Year

Resilience factors

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Barriers to Effective Plans

- Generic Goals
- Poor Engagement
- The ‘right’ school staff and relevant professionals not present
- Lack of understanding/exploration of the wider family
- Wider avenues of support not considered
- Reviews are not timely and cause drift
- Reduced Timetable Plan used inappropriate and plan does not address the barriers to full attendance
- Generic Goals
- Targets are not measurable with clear timeframes
- Reviews do not address lack of progress - start again approach/continuing with what is not working

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What are the elements of an effective plan?

- ✓ The voice of the child is taken into account
- ✓ Understanding the family composition and including all parents - – whole family approach
- ✓ Proactive partnership working - co-production Identification of the underlying causes of the poor attendance - push and pull factors
- ✓ Recognition of what is going well
- ✓ Assessment dictates what is included in the plan
- ✓ SMART actions which are individual to the child
- ✓ A focus on reintegration as early as possible
- ✓ Realistic & achievable outcomes
- ✓ Named key people to achieve set targets
- ✓ All parties to have clear actions to improve attendance
- ✓ What outcomes are hoped for? It is clear what success will look like
- ✓ Reflection and collaboration

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Individualised approaches – some examples

- Letting a pupil spend time in school once the school was closed for the day, to overcome her anxiety about being in the building.
- Staff member meet the pupil in the morning with the school dog. Once the pupil had walked the dog for a short while, they felt able to come in.
- A wake-up phone call every day for a limited period of time.
- Giving pupils special responsibilities in school to motivate them to be there.
- home visits.
- Teaching parents and pupils how to have routines in place in the morning – alarm set, shoes ready, bag packed – rather than assuming that they know what a good routine looks like.

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Because of these implications we need all plans to be SMART

Specific

Measurable

Achievable

Realistic

Timely

Every child and every circumstance is different therefore, every plan should reflect this and be bespoke to the presenting need(s)

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Align Interventions to identified barriers

Action Plan **Aim: (insert attendance target including expected date. Please note the child achieving 100% attendance is an aim and not an action)**				
Identified Barrier:	**Actions/interventions to be taken to address the barrier:**	**By When:**	**Person responsible:**	**How will we know it is working for the child?**

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Recognise the small improvements

- For example, if a pupil who is seldom in school is not there on Monday but is present on Tuesday, or arrives but is late, staff praise the success. But at the same time, they convey what needs to happen next. Expectations are not lowered but are broken down to become more achievable.
- When pupils come back to school after absence, particularly if they have been away for a long time, it is important that this return is carefully managed. Without this, they will go back into lessons where they will feel, and be, very behind in their learning. The right support being put in place, including to help the pupil catch up where practical, can make or break the return to school.

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Further support and guidance can be found at:

- School attendance - Schools (norfolk.gov.uk)

If you have any further questions that have not been answered today, then please contact the Attendance Team on 01603 233681 or at csattendance@norfolk.gov.uk

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