

ATTEND Framework

The Attend Framework is designed for school-aged students and is best used as an early intervention programme when attendance drops to below 90% over a period of two terms. ATTEND can be used as a tool to help identify the underlying reasons for absence. Reasons for low attendance are often varied and complex. ATTEND helps us to identify specific issues in each individual case so that professionals can engage the student in a collaborative process to put together an effective support plan.

You can use the Derby City Council EBSNA resources in line with the ATTEND Framework.

Step 1 – gathering information. Alongside the ATTEND Framework questionnaires, you can use the card sort, designing your dream school, the school stress survey or pupil questionnaires. You can also use the timeline ATTEND resource to understand the needs of the individual student.

Step 2 – action planning. You can use the audit as a simple method of checking the correct systems are in place to support the individual student. You can also use Derby City Council’s action plan and goal setting templates. The below information can be used to support students transition back into school after long or short periods of absence.

Step 3 – support. Provided are examples of good practice that guide a positive transition into school. There are also Autism and Anxiety specific resources on Derby City Council’s resource page. The EBSNA guidance outlines the importance of the graduated approach and utilising assess-plan-do-review.

Good practice for attendance

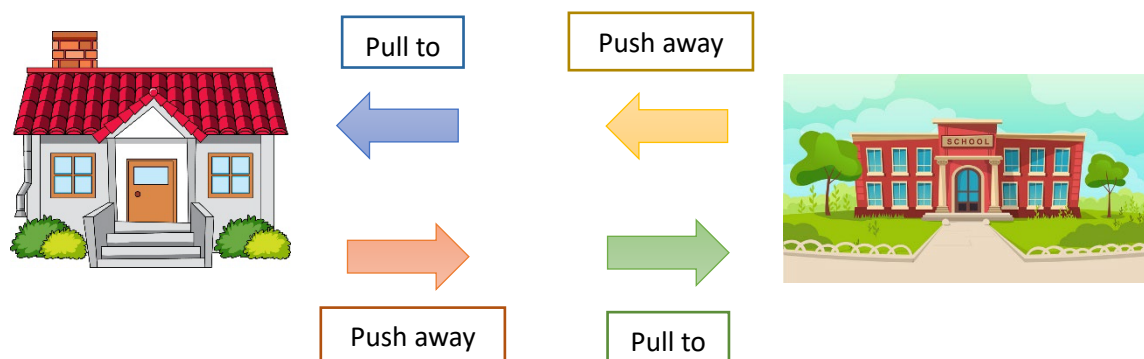
- + Monitor attendance registers weekly or fortnightly in order to spot problems early and act on these quickly.
- + Consider nudge technology, for example, texting reminders, to improve attendance.
- + Make early and regular contact with family to discuss the student’s reluctance to attend.
- + Where there are family issues with school, be prepared to meet with the family in a suitable and neutral space, or, if welcome, at home.
- + Identify a key person within school that the family can contact that has a positive relationship with the student and has availability to support.
- + Foster a genuinely collaborative approach – involve the parent/carers and encourage them to take an active part in any planning and reviewing.
- + Have an on-going dialogue with parents, carers, and the student. Make regular telephone/email contact with the parent/carer to provide updates, including the exchange of positive information about the student.
- + Foster good links and communication between support services.
- + Be prepared for difficulties or recurrence of the problem following natural breaks, e.g. holidays and illnesses.
- + Inform staff, including supply teachers or cover staff, about the student’s difficulties and the agreed reintegration plan.

Transitions

A successful transition ensures a gradual return to school that has considered the young person’s individual needs, push and pull factors and consults the systems around the child, including their family and professionals involved. Below are real examples of young people who have experienced ESBNA.

Case Study 1 – Ibrahim

Ibrahim is in Year 9 and has complex additional needs. Ibrahim has a diagnosis of Autism and experiences significant levels of anxiety. Ibrahim experiences situational mutism when outside of the family home. The COVID-19 pandemic took place throughout the end of primary school, where he remained at home in isolation due to a family member being at higher risk of illness. In turn, Ibrahim did not experience a transition to secondary school that supported a reduction in anxiety, which led to complete non-attendance. Ibrahim has now been out of school for the first two years of secondary school. Ibrahim’s family want to support his return to school as they are concerned by his lack of learning and socialising. After considering ‘push and pull factors’, school were then able to intervene to ensure a gradual transition programme, which included enabling Ibrahim to check-in with mum throughout the day via text, mentoring with a key teacher to build a supportive relationship, key person to meet and greet each day and provide reflection at the end of the day, and information sharing with all the teachers to better understand how best to communicate with Ibrahim. School implemented visual supports and provided sensory items. School also did some work to develop a friendship group by setting up activities he would enjoy with peers, such as Pokémon club and board games club.



<p>Pull to home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can manage sensory needs better – reduced loud noises, busy spaces, choice of preferred food. • Consistency of routine and expectations. • Can play preferred online games. • Can sleep as long as needed. 	<p>Push away from school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fear of making mistakes in work, especially in English. • Low confidence in handwriting, spelling and fear of new subjects like languages. • Finds it challenging to communicate with peers and make friends.
<p>Push away from home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Family wants him to return to school and is keen to work with school to support this. • Wants to play sports again. 	<p>Pull to school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enjoys maths and science. • Enjoys playing sport with peers.

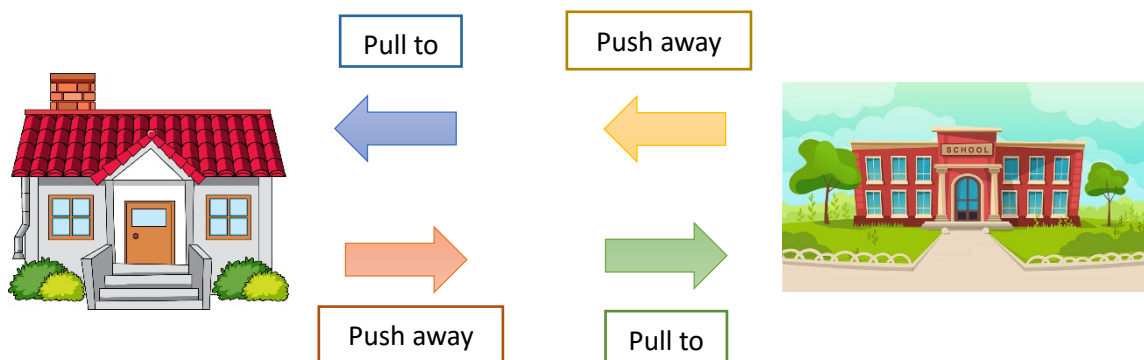
What does this student need to successfully integrate into school? 10 steps to get started.

Step 1	Understanding of the ATTEND framework. Completion of the whole-school audit and universal strategies applied.
Step 2	Identified key person for the young person.
Step 3	Family and services coproduction meeting at the school e.g. as part of the ATTEND framework. This might look like completing parent questionnaires e.g. as part of the ATTEND framework, before, during or after the meeting. You may want to invite a representative from the young person's previous provision if they feel they can contribute to understanding the young person's needs.
Step 4	Key person visits home or in an agreed mutual place to meet young person and develop positive relationship. This may look like games, talking about interests and completing card matching activity, ladder activity, creating a dream school with Lego, and secondary school pupil questionnaires. Ensure this is matched to their current level of learning. It is likely that the young person will find it challenging to engage and communicate in the first session, therefore may need several visits (potentially twice a week for up to four weeks for at least 1 hour) to develop their confidence to communicate with you, engage in the process and complete the activities and questionnaires. Develop a one-page profile to share with key staff.
Step 5	Actions based on the ATTEND framework and utilising Derby City Council's resources. Develop a transition document that includes pictures of the school environment, a map, key staff, a visual timetable, and support systems available to the young person. This can be looked through at and discussed during the home visits.
Step 6	After school visit and tour for the young person with key person and parents present. Use the map to find and discuss key areas.
Step 7	Visit during school time to meet key worker and either a key teacher, pastoral support team member, or form tutor to transfer relationship. This should be for around 30-60 minutes, in a safe space and be centered around the young person's key interests. This may need to take place several times for the student to build up their confidence in the school environment and develop relationships with a range of staff.
Step 8	Visit during a lunch time to meet up to 3 students in the form group/class group with similar interests to complete activities related to this. This may need to take place several time to develop the young person's confidence.
Step 9	Visit at the beginning of the day to see the school environment and attend lesson 1 with the key person, which should be a preferred subject. Assess behaviour, communication and ensure to gain feedback from young person and parents/carers.
Step 10	Develop a transition timetable which gradually increases time in school. It may take up to 6 months for this student to be in school full-time every day. Ensure individual need is catered for prior to each lesson e.g. learning strategies, sensory preferences and communicate this with all staff. Ensure the student is aware of their adaptations and support systems in place.

Ensure check-ins take place from key person on days of non-attendance and throughout holiday periods through video or phone calls.
 Ensure key worker checks in with the student at the beginning and end of each day, reflecting on how the day went, identifying the positives and any challenges they may have experienced.
 Ensure feedback is communicated home in a timely manner.

Case Study 2 – Gabby

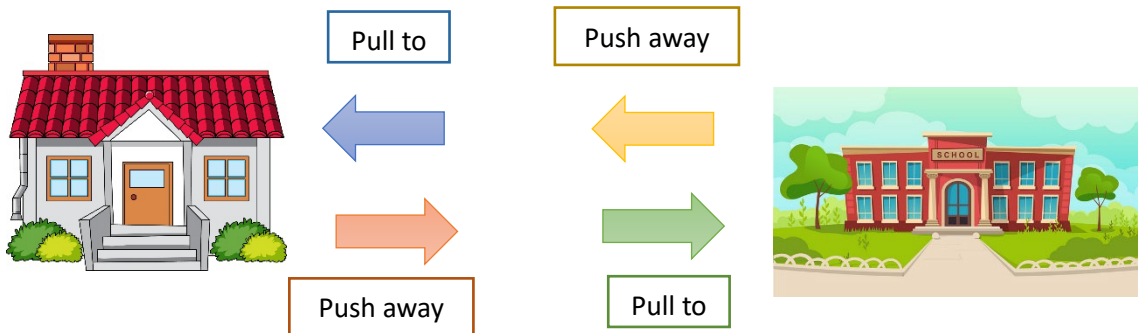
Gabby is in Year 9 and attends a mainstream secondary school. Her attendance in years 7 and 8 was just over 90%, but her attendance has dropped to 80% in the autumn term. Her engagement and behaviour have typically been positive since she joined her secondary school, but this is also changing with an increased number of detentions for refusal. After considering ‘push and pull factors’, the school used the ATTEND framework for informing guidance and strategies. Here, school were then able to intervene to enable Gabby to check-in with mum throughout the day, mentoring with a key teacher to build a supportive relationship and discuss her anxiety, adapted maths and science tasks, and information sharing with all the teachers to better understand what her behaviour in class was communicating. School also did some work to develop a friendship group by setting up activities she would enjoy with peers, including a music group.



<p>Pull to home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Young carer – worry about mum’s mental health and wellbeing. • Mum spending time with younger sibling without her. • When at home, spends time dreading going back to school resulting in her feeling unwell. • Fear of journey to school. 	<p>Push away from school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lessons are hard and teachers ‘reject’ her. • Feeling anxious about learning and is ‘pushed’ when anxious (e.g. hood up, withdrawing, using phone to text Mum). • No close friends and experiences of bullying. • Low self-confidence.
<p>Push away from home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mum wants her to return to school and is keen to work with school to support this. • Gabby wants to do well in school and be a music therapist. 	<p>Pull to school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationship with Head of Year • Likes Spanish and music

Case Study 3 – Gale

Gale has just started Year 2. He has a diagnosis of autism and has speech delays. Gale attended Year 2 for the first half-term, but his attendance has deteriorated in the run up to the Christmas break, reducing to less than 50%. After considering ‘push and pull factors’, the school used the ATTEND framework for informing guidance and strategies. Here, school were then able to intervene by providing more adult support to Gale in lessons by supporting the development of his fine motor skills and using visuals to support understanding. They also arranged for him to leave lessons earlier for break and lunch times avoid busy transitions. They also increased access to a sensory den for 10 minutes every hour and provided ear defenders and sensory chews. They also set up Minecraft club at lunchtime so he could socialise with peers and spend lunch time in a quieter space.



<p>Pull to home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Quieter and calmer – no loud, unpredictable corridors and halls. • Can eat lunch in a safe space. • Can play Minecraft on his device. • Parents are worried about him and like him to be at home, ‘where they can see him’. 	<p>Push away from school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finds it difficult to make friends due to his specific interests. • Feels anxious about eating in the lunch hall. • Has difficulty understanding some lesson content, especially phonics. • Gets tired in the final hour of the day.
<p>Push away from home:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The school routine is more structured than at home. • Parents are trying to home school which is currently unsuccessful. 	<p>Pull to school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Is good at maths and ICT. • Has a best friend at school who has similar interests. • Likes working towards golden time.

Adapted from Camden EBSA guidance

<u>Key information required</u>	<u>Practical supports</u>
Travel to school – how will they get there.	Go through journey to school, practice this, identify any companions.
Key people in school.	Give a simplified structured chart, provide photos, identify a key person.
Environment	Layout of school – provide maps, give tours, quiz, colour code subjects to building areas, identify toilets and break areas.
Structure of the day – timetables, break and lunchtime systems.	Provide timetables, visual timetables, colour code these, break and lunchtime systems – clearly identify time, location and menu options.
Social time – supporting social interactions and those more vulnerable to bullying.	Identify how pupils will be supported to make new friendships (targeted support), define kind and unkind behaviour, access to supported social activities (lunch clubs).
Academic demands – what lessons, how they are structured, homework.	Give information about how lessons are structured, consistent approach from all staff, homework expectations, how to use homework journal/diary.
Support systems in place – pastoral or SEN support teams.	Set out how young people will be supported in one page profile; identify key people; highlight on map where bases are located.
Equipment needed.	Provide checklist for each day.

Adapted from South Gloucestershire's EBSA guidance



Encouraging self-advocacy

Adapted from Lancashire EBSA guidance

I don't know where my classroom is

- I will get my plan from my student planner and see if I can work it out.
- I will try and ask someone in my class.
- I will ask my teacher.

If someone calls me an unkind name

- I will try and walk away and not swear.
- I will tell a teacher why I feel upset.
- My teacher will deal with it and talk to that person.

When I have nothing to do at break

- I could go to the library or find a club.
- I could buy a snack and eat in the dining hall.
- I could find my friends.

Strategies at Home

- + Support development of a secure attachment at home so that the CYP feels like they can separate. This may involve creating special time to be spent together which will vary depending on age, or more specialist intervention, such as Video Interaction Guidance (VIG).
- + Consider using transitional objects such as teddies, hair ties, photos, keyring that the CYP can take from home into school.
- + Acknowledge that anxiety is ok but don't over re-assure or dismiss the feeling. Accept the CYP's emotional experience of school, allow them to feel heard and normalise their experience.
- + Encourage and positively affirm the CYP when they go to school (e.g. 'I'm really happy for you').
- + Give the CYP some protected quality time with you at home ('special time').
- + Try to present a balanced view when talking about school and try to avoid negative narratives about school ('I was never good at Maths either').
- + Encourage the CYP to engage in mindfulness or other activities that may make them feel relaxed (e.g. mindful colouring).
- + Make the school day as predictable as possible by creating a visual planner for the week and checklists for school equipment. Encourage the CYP to tick days spent at school off on a calendar as they achieve them.
- + Ensure a clear routine is in place. This may include use of visuals/weekly planner/organisation, across home and school activities etc. Having a clear routine across school days, weekends and school holidays can help to maintain a sense of momentum.
- + Consider how to support good routines and boundaries around eating, sleeping, screen time and exercise.

Strategies at School

- + Create a sense of belonging in school by offering a positive greeting when seeing the CYP entering school/class (e.g. 'It is so lovely to see you!') and giving them a role and responsibility (e.g. 'Could you help me hand out these books?').
- + When the CYP is not at school, continue to communicate with them via email, notes, phone or video calls etc. This helps the CYP to feel like they are being 'kept in mind'.
- + Start and end the school day with protected quality time with a safe, consistent adult for 15 minutes.
- + Ensure there is a clear transition between parent/carer(s) and a trusted staff member at the start of each day.
- + Ensure the CYP sees positive interactions between home and school.
- + Consider the safe spaces that pupils can go to, such as a pastoral zone or library, as these may be less stigmatising for some pupils than the learning support area.
- + Identify and address any specific triggers that cause anxiety or distress.
- + Support the CYP with peer interactions (e.g. circle of friends, social skills groups).
- + Ensure that the school day is predictable by creating a consistent routine that is outlined on a visual schedule. Try to keep elements of the school day the same (e.g. entering school via the same route each day, having the same regulating activity on arrival).
- + Encourage and positively affirm the CYP when they go to school (e.g. 'I'm really happy that you've come into school today').

- + When possible, flexible schedules and alternative learning environments can facilitate engagement for students starting to attend school.
- + Consider using transitional objects such as teddies, hair ties, photos, keyring that the CYP can take from home into school. Allow them to text or phone home during the school day if needed.
- + Encourage the CYP to engage in mindfulness or other activities that soothe the CYP's nervous system. Identify activities that make them feel relaxed (e.g. mindful colouring). These activities could take place upon arrival at school and at regular intervals throughout the day. Carrying out these activities with an attuned adult is a helpful way to strengthen relationships and offer opportunities for a 'check in'.
- + Assign a member of staff as a "mentor" to help in times of 'crisis' (for example to call upon if pupil becomes anxious over losing dinner money). The same person could be the home-school liaison.
- + Person centred One Page Profile/Pupil Passport.
- + Provide a map of the new school building; colour code subjects and classrooms; highlight important areas e.g. dining hall, locker, hall, form room.
- + Create daily checklists so the correct items are taken to/ from school according to daily activities.
- + Create a user- friendly diary for organising homework.
- + Set up a "buddy-system" with a designated peer/ group to help the individual move between classes.
- + Plan for a consistent approach between all lessons. A staff communication system (in diary form) may be useful to pass on information.
- + Make provision for a 'chill out /safe space' for an individual to withdraw to when necessary.
- + Consider procedures for break and lunchtimes which can often be the most stressful time of the day. Options include a "circle of friends" or a lunch club as a way to structure these times. However, be vigilant about bullying.

Adapted from Camden EBSA guidance, Lancashire guidance and Somerset County Council EBSA guidance

Some useful transition resources:

- [Resources to Support Autistic Children and Young People \(autismeducationtrust.org.uk\)](https://autismeducationtrust.org.uk)
- [Transition to secondary animation and toolkit \(annafreud.org\)](https://annafreud.org)
- [Starting secondary school workbook \(snivelandshriek.com\)](https://snivelandshriek.com)
- [Early years transitions guidance \(westsussex.gov.uk\)](https://westsussex.gov.uk)

Links from West Sussex ESBA guidance