Leigh Stationers' Academy

Parental Guidance: Emotional Based Non-Attendance

At Leigh Stationers' Academy, we understand that some students may struggle to attend school due to emotional factors such as anxiety, low mood, or overwhelming worries. This leaflet explains what Emotionally Based Non-Attendance (EBNA) is, the risks of prolonged absence, and how we can work together to support your child.

Emotionally Based Non-Attendance (EBNA) refers to situations where a child finds it difficult to attend school due to emotional distress rather than deliberate truancy. Students may want to attend but feel unable to because of anxiety, fear, or emotional overwhelm. EBNA can develop gradually and often requires early, consistent support from both home and school.

Why is entrenched EBNA a concern?

When EBNA becomes prolonged or entrenched, it can lead to significant challenges for young people, including:

- Missed learning time, which can create gaps in knowledge and reduce confidence in lessons.
- Isolation from peer groups, making reintegration more difficult over time.
- Increased anxiety and catastrophising, where worries about school become bigger and harder to overcome.

Early support and regular attendance are key protective factors in preventing EBNA from escalating.

Support available in school

We offer structured support to help students rebuild confidence and re-engage with learning:

- Pastoral check-ins: Regular meetings with trusted staff to support wellbeing and problem-solving.
- Guided Self-Help Workshops: Structured sessions focused on managing anxiety, building coping strategies, and developing positive routines.

Our aim is to support students within lessons wherever possible, helping them feel safe, understood and able to succeed. However, we are only able to support students in this way when they are in school.

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Advice for parents and carers supporting a child with EBNA

Small, consistent steps can make a significant difference:

- Establish positive morning and evening routines to reduce uncertainty.
- Focus on rewarding progress, even small steps toward attendance.
- Avoid projecting frustration or anxiety; calm reassurance helps reduce pressure.
- Keep communication open and acknowledge your child's feelings while maintaining clear expectations about attendance.

Expectations of the Academy

We ask families to work in partnership with us by:

- Informing the Academy of any absence daily, following normal attendance procedures.
- Attending parental meetings or review sessions so we can plan effective support together.
- Maintaining open communication with pastoral staff regarding progress or concerns.

Limits on what the Academy can authorise

While we will always support students experiencing EBNA, emotionally based absence is **not classified as an authorised absence** under attendance guidance. Our role is to provide support and intervention to help students return to regular attendance, rather than approve ongoing absence.

Working Together

EBNA can feel overwhelming for both students and families, but with early support, clear routines and consistent communication, many young people successfully rebuild their confidence in attending school.

Please contact the Academy if you would like to discuss support for your child.