

02/04/2021

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When schools re-opened last fall, there was a rising volume of reports alleging parent or guardian [Educational Neglect](#) submitted by school personnel to the SCR due to student absence from online instruction. As one avenue to address attendance issues, OCFS and the State Education Department (SED) would like to emphasize the need for continued partnership among

caused impairment or imminent risk of impairment to the child. As it relates to excessive absences, a call to the SCR is an option of last resort.

Schools should collaborate with the following professionals to identify needs and resources and exhaust all other possible strategies and supports to help families resolve any barriers to school attendance before making an educational neglect or Person in Need of Supervision (PINS) referral:

- Local Department of Social Services (LDSS) Point of Contact (POC)
- Community agencies and service providers
- PINS diversion services (work with lead agency: either LDSS or Department of Probation)

Strategies and Resources to Assist and Support Students and Families

- Ensure each student and family has equitable access to technology, internet, and troubleshooting support;
- Assign each student an “ally” – an adult responsible for checking in on the student every day at home and in school;
- Collaborate with community partners (e.g., LDSS POC) to conduct virtual and in-person meetings/events to identify student and family needs;
- Student wake-up calls, texts and social media;
- Call, U.S. mail, email, text, personal message on social media with/to students, parents, family members, relatives, friends and identified emergency contacts;
- Offer and provide translation and interpretation services to families who speak a language other than English at home;
- Use existing positive relationships with school social workers, athletic coaches, and community liaisons to make sidewalk, porch, or driveway visits.

Resources:

[Every Student Present](#) is a public awareness campaign of the New York State Council on Children and Families that promotes awareness of excessive student absenteeism and offers prevention and intervention resources and strategies to build capacity among schools, families, and communities.

[Attendance Works: Advancing Student Success by Reducing Chronic Absence](#) is a national non-profit initiative that supports improved policy and practices around school attendance. Its mission is to advance student success and help close equity gaps by reducing chronic absence. Attendance Works has updated its latest 2019 guidance specifically for the COVID pandemic. Resources include:

[Attendance Playbook: Smart Strategies for Reducing Chronic Absenteeism in the COVID Era](#);

- Ideas for how to encourage and track attendance during distance learning;
- 25+ effective and readily scalable approaches to reducing chronic absenteeism; and
- Implementation guide for schools and districts.

Supporting Children and Youth in Foster Care with Educational Needs During COVID19:

Students in foster care already face unique educational challenges that have been exacerbated by the pandemic. Working together, schools and child welfare workers can support caregivers through frequent outreach to understand the needs and challenges they are facing to support their children's education.

Progress monitoring, as well as additional academic support such as tutoring, are Prdufar,Tc 09.53

Note: A report will not be accepted without this information. This varies slightly from the list below under the Preparing to Make an Educational Neglect Call. The above is what is required to make a report, while the second list below are items the caller should have ready before they call.

It is important to understand families are facing barriers to remote learning during COVID-19; some examples of these barriers include, but are not limited to:

- WIFI/Hotspot/connectivity issues;
- Device/tablet/computer issues;
- Language barriers; and
- Parents/guardians who are not computer literate.

Preparing to Make an Educational Neglect Call to the SCR:

Once the school has exhausted all efforts and strategies to help families resolve any barriers to school attendance, and a call to the SCR is deemed necessary, the following information should be collected and presented by the caller to the SCR:

- Student demographics, including address
- Number of absences and when
- Efforts made to contact the family (e.g., phone, mail, text)
- Whether contact with the parent was made
- If contact was made, what was the parents' response
- Challenges faced by the family
- Actions school has taken to assist family
- Harm to the child
- Whether the student has an IEP and/or other interventions and/or special needs

What to Expect

Once a call to the SCR is made, there are two possible outcomes:

- Report is not registered by the SCR. There will be no child protective services (CPS) investigation.
- Report is registered by the SCR and assigned to a local CPS for investigation.

Once a report is assigned to a local CPS, the CPS will complete an investigation or convert the case to a [Family Assessment Response \(FAR\)](#).

FAR is a differential response that may be used for CPS reports that have been accepted by the SCR where there is no safety concern that rises to the level of immediate or impending danger for the child and/or family. FAR is a particularly strong tool to provide needed supports to families when a school has exhausted efforts to engage the family and the local CPS determines that the family needs community-based services following an allegation of educational neglect only.

Recognizing that FAR is an existing important resource to address educational neglect and challenges resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic, OCFS developed a streamlined application for LDSSs that presently do not use FAR, allowing them to opt into this

child welfare systems can begin to create lasting systems change to keep children safe and ensure child and family health and well-being.

Questions for NYSED:

Outstanding questions from education personnel should be directed to StudentSupportServices@nysed.gov

Questions for OCFS:

Outstanding questions from child welfare personnel should be directed to: CWCS.Ed.Neglect@ocfs.ny.gov