
TITLE OF REPORT: Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) Update

Purpose of the Report

In December 2019 a paper was shared with School Forum on the increasing number of children and young people who were unable to access their educational provision due to their Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA). The outcome of the report was an agreement by all Gateshead schools and academies to contribute to the cost of 1 EBSA-Learning Mentor (EBSA-LM) to work alongside the 2ND EBSA-LM funded from the HNB. This report provides an update on the current position of the EBSA-LM.

Background

The paper presented to School Forum in December 2019, set out the definition of Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA), along with the strategies that the LA is using to address the rise in numbers of children and young people who are not attending school due to EBSA, including

- Whole school support and training
- Interventions and strategies
- Transition
- Individual Pupil Level

In relation to work at an Individual Pupil Level the LA have 2 ongoing pilots.

- 1) the AV1 Avatars, the LA had secured funds (approximately 35,000) to pay for 10 AV1 Avatars to link pupils at home with their classroom
- 2) the EBSA-LM the LA HNB had agreed to pay for 1 person and the request was asked and agreed for schools to pay for the second person.

Work is ongoing to agree criteria for allocation of the EMSA-LM and allocation would be through the Education Inclusion Panel (EIP).

The agreement was that the EBSA-LM funded via the HNB would work with those pupils who were unable to attend school due to high levels of EBSA, while the EBSA-LM funded by the schools would work with those pupils identified as having EBSA but who were still attending their schools; although this might mean poor and sporadic patterns of attendance.

Proposal

The funding that was agreed would normally run from April-March (financial year), however with the current situation (COVID 19) the recruitment process has been temporarily halted.

Therefore, School Forum is being provided with two alternative options for consideration once the current situation resolves itself.

Option 1

We shift the funding from the financial year to the academic year

Pros

- This would allow time for the EMSA-LM to be employed and trained and still provide two terms of input.

Cons

- It means there is a cross over between financial year and academic year
- It means that School Forum /schools may be provided with evidence to consider future options after the budget for the next financial year need to be agreed for de-delegation

Option 2

We ask schools for 2 terms of funding from the 2020/21 academic year and a further 1 year of funding from the 21/22 academic year, so that the positions would run from September 2020 until March 2022.

Pros

- This would give time for the employment and training of the EBSA-LM (Autumn Term 2020).
- This would provide time for the EBSA-LM work to be evaluated over several terms to ascertain the impact
- This would allow for three interim reports to be provided to School Forum (November 20, May 21 and Nov 21) as well as an annual report to schools Sept 21 (for the 20/21 academic year)

Cons

- This would cost the schools an additional 2 terms of funding

Recommendations

School Forum are asked to consider the above options for moving forward with the appointment of the 2 EBSA-LM.

For the following reasons:

To ensure that the children and young people in Gateshead receive an education that is suitable and appropriate to their needs and abilities

CONTACT: Jeanne Pratt Ext 8644