

Attendance Policy

July 2024

Aims

Our overall mission is:

To provide safe and nurturing educational settings that enable young people to re-engage positively with academic study and develop their social skills to prepare them for a hopeful future.

To do this, young people are supported to demonstrate:

- *Cooperation*
- *Consideration*
- *Contribution*

which enables them to change and grow.

In line with our mission, we ask young people to contribute to their own progress, the wider RFHCS community and more hopeful future, with support. We believe that engaging with learning and the support available at RFHCS is an important part of recovery that enables young people to overcome other challenges. As such, we provide in-person, face-to-face support in the vast majority of cases as opposed to a remote learning offer.

However, we recognise that for many of our students, school attendance has been a significant barrier and symptom of mental health difficulties and aim to support this through individualised plans that encourage re-engagement, based on principles of Emotionally Based School Avoidance. Our approaches are underpinned by trauma informed practice and good autism practice, meaning that we understand that many factors can affect attendance and offer support with these underlying causes.

Our Attendance Ethos

At RFHCS, we use the term Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA) to describe attendance difficulties. This underpins how we approach supporting attendance at the RFHCS. We therefore have the following beliefs about EBSA:

- Attendance difficulties are a result of emotional and/or medical difficulties, unmet needs and avoidance as opposed to refusal or defiance.
- It is important to understand the factors pushing students away from school and pulling them towards staying at home.
- A flexible, individualised approach is needed to support EBSA. Students may make different rates of progress and progress may not be linear.

There are many factors that can lead to attendance difficulties, including:

- Safeguarding incidents
- Friendships difficulties
- Experiences of bullying
- Difficulties accessing learning
- Anxiety about exams or attainment
- Stressors within families such as physical or mental illness, separation or bereavement, poverty
- Changes outside of school
- Mental health difficulties
- Feeling overwhelmed in a school environment (e.g. sensory needs)
- Neurodiversities such as autistic spectrum condition

See Appendix 1 for the 'push and pull grid', a tool used to gather information with young people about the factors affecting attendance.

Although adaptations in our setting aim to facilitate attendance, we recognise that these difficulties may persist for some. We therefore intervene and provide support based on the following principles:

- We continue to offer support to young people regardless of attendance and prioritise communication and engagement while working towards physical attendance in cases where young people have ongoing difficulties.
- Young people are 'held in mind' by staff regardless of attendance. Support is considered for all young people we attend- 'no child left behind'
- Identifying factors pushing young people away from school and pulling them towards home. Support is planned around these.
- Providing a flexible curriculum and approach that allows for adaptation to meet individual needs.
- Support planning is child centred and focused on what they may need at that time. This is done in collaboration with the team around the young person, including parents/carers, their mental health team, social care and home school.
- Setting SMART (specific, manageable, attainable, relevant, time bound) attendance goals that gradually increase.
- Support is provided to help young people on RFHCS programmes (e.g. Futures, Beginnings, Paths) to plan for a more hopeful future, through post-16 planning.

Monitoring Attendance

Measuring Attendance

At RFHCS, we focus on measuring progress made in school attendance in relation to individualised goals. Each week a record is kept of: overall minutes spent at school, minutes young people are expected to attend that week, percentage of attendance in relation to goal. This allows us to more fairly assess how young people are attending in relation to the expectations in place for them and, thus, track progress over time.

Dual registration

In circumstances where it has been agreed that the pupil will be registered at more than one school, the pupil's name will remain on the admission register. The main examples of

dual registration are pupils who are attending another school on a temporary basis, such as a pupil referral unit, a hospital school or a special school.

The RFHCS falls under the category of both ‘hospital school,’ and ‘special school’ or ‘alternative educational provision.’ In these circumstances, young people can be placed on ‘Dual registration’ with the RFHCS anywhere from weeks to years depending on the progress and individual circumstances of the case.

Most young people in our Beginnings, Paths, Thomas Group and Futures programmes of study are coded as ‘Dual Registration,’ on our SIMS administration program.

Attendance and Absence Codes

National codes are used to record and monitor attendance and absence. We use this data to gain a greater understanding of the level of, and the reason for, absence and the delivery of education.

Present:

- / = am
- \ = pm

Authorised absence means that one of a specific set of circumstances applies. Unauthorised absence is where a pupil’s absence is not one of the types of absence listed as authorised or where the reason for a pupil’s absence has not been provided and cannot be established.

We typically use the following codes to record reasons for non-attendance as set out below:

B	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educated offsite • CAMHS appointment • Authorised learning online for long term medical illness or OT referral
M	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medical appointment with evidence provided by parents/carers
I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical illness, communicated by parent/carer • Mental health (e.g. feeling overwhelmed, anxious, low)
C	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extenuating, exceptional circumstances (e.g. bereavement) • A leave of absence granted entirely at the headteacher’s discretion • Where a leave of absence is granted, the school will determine the number of days a pupil can be absent
C1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence for a regulated performance or employment abroad.
C2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For pupils on part-time timetables.
V	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off site school • Educational visits
R	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Religious observance
O	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised absence • Contact made with home but reason not given • Reason unrelated to extenuating, exceptional circumstances • Reason unrelated to physical or mental illness
N	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unauthorised absence • No contact made
L	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late but arrived before 10:30am
U	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Late after 10:30am (when registers close)

The following are additional codes listed by Camden Local Authority:

G	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holiday not granted or in excess of the period determined
Z	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prospective pupil not on admission register
S	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only granted to Year 11 pupils during public examinations. • Provision will still be made available for those pupils who want to continue to come in to revise. • As study leave is unsupervised it must be recorded as absence
#	<p>Whole school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • days between terms • half terms • occasional days (for example, bank holidays) • weekends • up to 5 non-educational days • use as a polling station. <p>Partial school closures that are known and planned in advance such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'staggered starts' or 'induction days' where different term dates have been agreed for different year groups - this code is used to record the year group(s) that is not due to attend
Y1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence due to transport normally provided not being available
Y2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Widespread disruption to travel
Y3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For when part of a school is closed
Y4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexpected whole school closure (different from code # for planned closures)
Y5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For pupils in the criminal justice system
Y6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absence due to public health guidance or law
Y7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Any other unavoidable cause
Q	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to attend due to lack of access arrangements

Local authority response to absence

Camden Local Authority expects all students to achieve an attendance level of at least 95% in every school year. Students are encouraged to have attendance as close to 100% as possible, taking into consideration rare occasions when a young person is too ill and so unfit to attend.

Under Section 19 of the Education Act, local authorities have a statutory duty and are responsible for arranging suitable education for children of compulsory school age who, because of health reasons, would otherwise not receive suitable education. This applies whether or not the child is registered at a school and whatever type of school they attend. The education must be full-time or as close to full-time as the child's health allows. Penalty notices or other legal interventions can be sought if support from parents/carers around attendance is not engaged with.

Under Section 19 of the Education Act, children and young people living in the borough of Camden and young people missing 15 days or more of school because of medical and/or mental health are referred to Dylan Buckle; the named officer who is responsible for the education of children with additional health needs. As manager of the Camden School

Inclusion Team, he works closely with the Royal Free to ensure young people in the borough are signposted to the medical needs panel and support is deployed on a case by case basis.

Safeguarding

We adhere to the London Child Protection Procedures, adopted by Camden's Children, Schools and Families. The RFHCS has a safeguarding team who meet weekly and report to the head teacher. The Safeguarding team work closely with senior leaders, programme leads as well as other medical/mental health professionals to understand more about the difficulties young people are experiencing with engagement and attendance in a wider holistic context.

Staff have a responsibility to report concerns to the designated safeguarding lead, who will take an appropriate course of action to ensure a pupil's safety and well-being. Although it is important to have a good relationship with families, it does not override the need to protect the child.

There are embedded procedures to highlight young people who are struggling with engagement and attendance. These are:

- A protected space in whole staff morning briefings which take place two times a week
- All young people are plotted against Wave interventions 1/2/3 and discussed at fortnightly Learning and Wellbeing meetings
- Weekly safeguarding team meeting at the end of a week

The attendance of individual young people is flagged if there are concerns around consecutive/persistent or other patterns of declining engagement and/or nonattendance.

Communication and Safeguarding

We have daily contact with parents/carers and young people and can provide support to help young people attend if they are struggling. As outlined in the Home School agreement, we ask that parents/carers support their young person to attend.

In the event that a young person or parent/carer has not informed us that the young person will not be attending, the safeguarding team are notified and will attempt to make contact using the numbers and emergency contacts given on SIMS. If the young person and/or parent/carer are not contactable on this day, the team around the child will be notified. If this persists to a second day, a home visit will be arranged for the following day, in collaboration with the team around the child and the home school.

If communication continues to be poor when reporting absence or if there are frequent difficulties contacting the parent/carer, the DSL will invite the parent/carer and young person for a meeting to reiterate expectations for communication as per the Home School agreement. We will also explore and discuss potential difficulties around communication and make a clear plan about how we can work together to improve this. An additional emergency number will be requested so we can ensure we are able to account for the young person if they are not present.

Remote Learning

First and foremost, RFHCS provides in-person, face-to-face education as opposed to a remote learning offer. Direct, online teaching/tuition is not part of the typical offer. However, where physical illness or mental health conditions prevent young people from physically attending, online learning may be offered. The RFHCS uses Google Classroom, Teams and Zoom as platforms in these instances.

Online learning may be offered as part of a plan to reintegrate back, and only when it is judged that providing remote education would not adversely affect the pupil's return. It is important to note that we do not view remote education as an equal alternative to attending in person; we do not offer any young person this as a full time offer in any of our educational programmes of study. See our Remote Learning Policy for further information.

Safeguarding young people on reduced timetables (C2)

“The Department for Education (DfE) defines the C2 attendance code for a compulsory school-aged pupil on a part-time timetable, meaning they are not physically present in school at the time the register is taken. This code is for an authorised absence, specifically a leave of absence due to a pupil's reduced timetable. “

Authorised Absence:

C2 is used to mark a student as authorised to be absent because they are on a part-time timetable.

Part-Time Timetable:

This code is for pupils who are not attending full-time school but have an approved reduced schedule.

- Each young person who is being supported with a reduced timetable (C2) will have a personalised risk assessment completed by the safeguarding team to identify possible risks when not in school.
- There is daily contact from school with the young person and/or parent/carer (both on days they are and are not due to be at Konstam).
- We ensure that the young person knows who from school they can contact if support is needed and are made aware that they can do this on any day, Monday-Friday.
- All young people and parents/carers are provided with signposting information to crisis lines that they can contact if needed.

Responsibilities

Home School Agreement

Low or inconsistent attendance significantly disadvantages children, especially those who have previous, significant gaps in their education. We work with parents/carers and young people to ensure young people are making progress in terms of attendance as our work with young people is often very time limited. The following is taken from our Home School

Agreement which summarises the agreement between RFHCS Konstam, parents/carers and young people upon joining our provision.

RFHCS Konstam agrees to work with parent(s)/carers to...

- Monitor each pupil’s attendance record to ensure children attend regularly
- Provide a daily morning call home and offer support throughout the day
- Share attendance data with home schools
- Support young people and families to increase attendance with individualized plans where needed

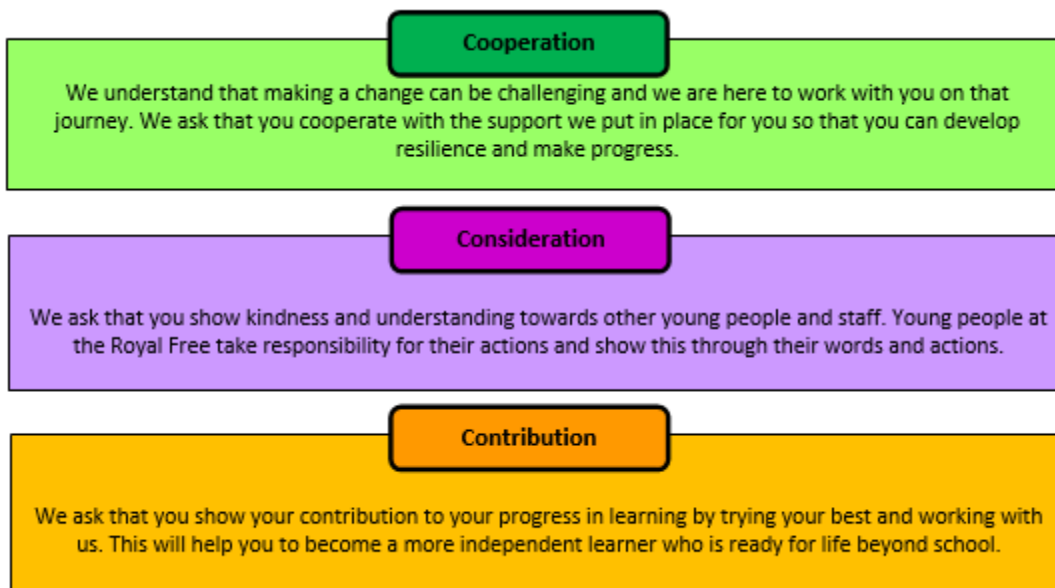
Governors agree to...

- Complete a half termly review of attendance data with relevant staff
- Hold a termly attendance panel where a young person, parent/carer, Head Teacher and other relevant staff meet with governors to discuss attendance

Parent(s)/carers agree to work with RFHCS Konstam to...

- Ensure my child attends regularly
- Keep us informed of issues that may affect a child’s attendance and about any known absences such as hospital appointments or illness.
- Collaborate with staff to find solutions to support my child’s attendance
- Only book holidays during designated school holidays

Young people agree to...



Evidence for conditions that prevent attendance in person

In the majority of cases a parent/carer’s notification that their child is ill can be accepted without question or concern. Only where further information is required should medical evidence be requested.

In working closely with our NHS colleagues, we acknowledge that this can place additional pressure on health professionals, their staff and their appointments system, particularly if the illness is one that does not require treatment by a health professional.

Instances where we would request medical evidence to provide context for absence:

- Where there is concern about the illness and whether it prevents attendance
- For some of our young people who have been referred to us because of a longer term medical condition, we ask that a medical professional provide us with a letter stating clinical advice to guide our thinking around the amount of time they feel the young person can engage in education per day as well as some context around how to manage the medical condition in the context of attending an educational provision.
- If mental health is named as the reason for absence over 5 consecutive days- the DSL and programme leader will contact the young person's mental health team to highlight concerns and update them. The DSL and programme lead will speak to the parent/carer about possible referral pathways to begin a process of acquiring support for the young person's mental health if this is not already in place.
 - If mental health is named as the reason, the young person is absent for 5 consecutive days and there is a sense of escalating risk, the DSL will contact the multi-disciplinary team around the child, attempt to speak with the young person/parent/carer directly to assess what immediate steps may need to be taken. This might also include referral to Early Help or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).
- If physical health is noted as the reason for absence over 5 consecutive school days we ask that parents/carers provide us with confirmation that medical advice has been sought (e.g. GP appointment, medical consultant advice).
- If persistent absence still continues due to physical illness, the DSL and programme lead will invite the young person/parent/carer for a meeting to discuss options around medical services the young person could refer into. It may also be the case that we could contact the GP directly and with consent, request a paediatric review to check the overall health of the young person.

Support Systems

Reward Systems for Attendance

At RFHCS, we recognise and celebrate progress and improvement related to attendance.

Our rewards systems include:

- Comments uploaded to SIMs that are communicated to parents/carers
- End of term award certificates for attendance- linked to whole school BRIDGES character dispositions
- Weekly recognition and reward for students who have made progress with attendance

Universal Approaches to Support Attendance

The RFHCS environment and systems in place aim to support and promote attendance for all young people. Our approach is underpinned by trauma informed practice: support is

planned based on the principles of positive relationships and psychological safety (e.g. routine, consistency, transparency).

Positive Relationships

- Positive welcome where each day is treated as a new day
- Consistent key adults who can continue communication with young people whether they have or have not attended
- Ensure a trusted adult meets the child when entering the building
- Protected quality time with a trusted adult during the day
- Positive affirmation to young people and parents/carers when young people have attended

Psychological Safety

- Daily communication with parents/carers and/or young people
- Designated safe spaces that young people can use
- Individualised approach to teaching to ensure that young people can remain up to date with work
- Providing frequent opportunities for young people to re-engage
- Supporting young people to think about post-16 options if relevant
- Adaptations made to support young people’s ability to regulate their emotions

Skills teaching

- Teaching coping or relaxation strategies
- Emotional regulation interventions such as Equine therapy, Drama therapy, Speech and language therapy, ELSA

Targeted Support for Attendance Difficulties

When young people are struggling with attendance, a support structure is used to plan the support they may need. We recognise that all young people’s push/pull factors are different and therefore provide individualised support that reflects their strengths, aspirations and difficulties.

For young people beginning a programme in September, the assess, plan, do, review structure is used to determine the attendance support required (see Figure 2). Decisions to move young people to waves of support at different points in the year then follow the structure as outlined in Figure 3.

Assess		Plan	Do		Review	
Week 1	Week 2	Week 3	Week 4	Week 5	Week 6	Week 7
Monitor attendance		Decide on intervention wave support needed	Action intervention plan depending on wave support		Review in Learning and Wellbeing meeting	
Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily contact from Programme Link • Link person contacts parent and young person 		Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss at Learning and Wellbeing meeting (attended by 	Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key staff to carry out action plan (see wave support outlined below) 		Process: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff in Learning and Wellbeing meeting review 	

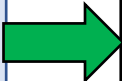
if support is needed <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Daily comments logged on CPOMS • Link Person and/or Programme Link raises to DSL/SENCO • Flag in weekly safeguarding meeting (based on CPOMS comments) 	Programme Link, DSL, EP, SENCO) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate actions for support to Link Person, Programme Link and other relevant staff 		progress and set further actions <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communicate actions for support to Link Person, Programme Link and other relevant staff
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Intervention Wave 1

Intervene when:

- Attendance has been less than 3/5 days for 1 week
- Student or parent/carer has expressed that they are finding it difficult to attend
- Late frequently over a 2-week period (without EBSA plan)
- Pattern forming around non-attendance on certain days
- No direct contact from young person

- Flag in weekly safeguarding meeting and Learning and Wellbeing meeting
- Programme link and/or Link Person communicates concerns with parent/carer via phone call
- Programme Link and/or Link Person contacts young person to explain that we've noticed attendance difficulties and want to support them
- Programme Link and/or Link Person sets a goal for the following week and agrees supportive strategies
- Daily check ins via text or phone call from Programme Link/Link Person
- Approaches and plan shared with all staff in Staff Briefing
- Bring attendance plan and concerns to multi-disciplinary team (if applicable)

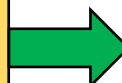


- Continue with approach
- Ensure Link Person and/or Programme Link praise efforts made to improve attendance

Intervention Wave 2

Move to Wave 2 if little or no progress has been made after 2 weeks

- Begin EBSA support plan
- Meeting with key staff (Programme Link, EP, SENCO, DSL, Link Person), parent/carer and young person. Use EBSA resources and strategies (push and pull, ladder of anxiety). Establish a plan.
- Head Teacher meets with young person
- Update multi-disciplinary network and home school about EBSA plan
- Daily check ins from Programme Link/Link Person
- Phone call or online check in from Link Person weekly
- Link Person to visit young person with classwork or to check in at regular intervals if young person is not attending
- Link Person to review GCSE options and focus on plans for post-16 (if Year 11)
- Review meeting after 2 weeks (or agreed time) with Programme Link, Link Person and relevant staff
- Approaches and plan shared with all staff in Staff Briefing



- Continue with approach
- Ensure Link Person and/or Programme Link praise efforts made to improve attendance

Intervention Wave 3

Move to Wave 3 if:

- No attendance in relation to Wave 2 intervention after 4 weeks
- Little or no contact from parent/carer or YP for 2 weeks

- Involve home school partner or School Inclusion Manager to inform them of support to date and discuss next steps.
- Hold a MDT meeting with young person to discuss next steps and describe this wave of intervention
- Discuss wellbeing check with MDT to ensure someone in the network will see the young person
- MASH referral if concerns around safeguarding, involving the MDT team and home school for a joint referral to be made
- 'Inreach' or Beginnings support offered

Inreach Support at Wave 3

Why Inreach support?

Some young people's difficulties with attendance may persist despite accessing our programmes. This may be due to declining mental health, such as increased anxiety and/or low mood.

Our highest level of attendance intervention, Inreach, allows us to continue to offer a form of support to young people that is more accessible to them. It aims to provide a sense of routine and structure for the young person, as well as enhancing the safeguarding support around them. It is important to note that Inreach does not equate to an online or at-home learning offer as the teaching programme at the RFHCS is an in-person provision.

What could Inreach support involve?

On Inreach support, a bespoke timetable of check in opportunities and targeted support would be offered to the young person. This could include:

Pastoral focus:

- Support sessions from a therapeutic professional (e.g. Drama Therapy, Educational Psychology, Speech and Language Therapy, Music Wellbeing, Equine Therapy)
- ELSA (Emotional Literacy Support Assistant) check in
- Check in with the young person's Link Person
- Home visit from a key adult known to the young person to drop off and collect work completed and/or offer a check in (e.g. Link Person, DSL, Pastoral Programme Lead)
- Support offered to the parent/carer to further support their young person in the home
- Direct input from the Designated Safeguarding Lead

Teaching and learning focus:

- Individual Google Classroom set up for targeted work to be sent to the young person as a way to communicate and provide feedback on tasks set
- Support session to complete tasks uploaded to Google Classroom
- Feedback on a task from a subject teacher- either written and returned via the Google Classroom platform or 1:1 online/face to face meeting arranged with a specific subject teacher
- Creating an adapted or bespoke timetable
- Offer of 1:1 tuition teaching session online in a chosen subject
- Support with post-16 options and preparing for adulthood

Attending Konstam in person is always offered to the young person as part of this timetable.

Inreach and Safeguarding

All Wave 3 plans, will involve direct input from the DSL who will be closely monitoring the progress of the intervention plan. If there has been little progress in regards to engagement from the young person and family after 4 weeks, the DSL will liaise with the home school to consider making a joint Early Help/MASH referral. Other professionals working with the family such as medical or mental health colleagues will also be invited to contribute to the thinking about immediate next steps around this action.

It is important to note that a MASH referral will always be made as a final step when all other avenues of intervention have been attempted to engage the young person with pastoral and/or education. Working with the family remains the priority, and as such we will always seek to gain consent for any referral that is made but understand that there may be instances where a referral may be made without the support of the family.

How long is Inreach support offered for?

This decision is taken on a case by case basis and in line with progress against interventions. Inreach support is reviewed every 2 weeks at both Safeguarding and Learning and Wellbeing planning meetings to ensure that young people are accessing it and making progress. The decision to withdraw the young person from the programme is taken by members of the Camden School Inclusion Panel.

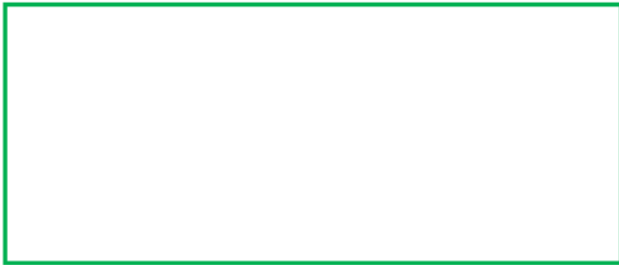
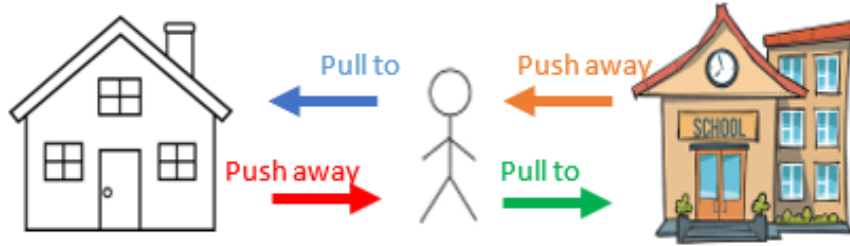
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Appendices

Appendix 1: Push and Pull Factors Grid



Designed by Camden Educational Psychology Service