

# Project Information Sheet for research on school approaches to reducing absence and exclusions

## 1. Why are you receiving this information?

You may have been contacted by NFER, or our partner on the project, [The Difference](#), to take part in this study (for example by participating in an interview) and this Project Information Sheet provides you with further details about what this involves.

By participating in the study you will contribute to an understanding of the different approaches used by schools, including internal alternative provision (IAP), and their effectiveness in reducing exclusion and persistent absence.

## 2. What is the purpose of this research?

The Education Endowment Foundation (EEF) and the Youth Endowment Fund (YEF) have funded the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) to carry out a study of approaches used by mainstream secondary schools, including internal alternative provision (IAP) and their effectiveness in reducing exclusion and persistent absence.

The study aims to develop evidence regarding practice in this area which can help schools deploy approaches which are effective in enabling pupils at the highest risk of absenteeism and exclusion to attend and positively engage with education.

## 3. What does taking part in this study involve?

The study is designed to build a picture of the approaches used by schools and their prevalence.

Research undertaken will consist of the following activities:

- Interviews with education experts/stakeholders in the IAP/AP field.
- Case-study school visits, comprising interviews with a strategic decision-maker for the approach and a staff member responsible for implementation, together with a visit to the facility.
- A national survey of all mainstream secondary schools in England.

If this research identifies a sufficient number of distinctive approaches we intend to design an impact evaluation using data from the National Pupil Database (NPD). Initial plans for the impact evaluation include the following activities:

- Analysis of data from pupils deemed to be at risk of exclusion on the National Pupil Database (NPD).
- Visits to case-study schools, comprising three staff interviews (a senior leader responsible for attendance/exclusion policy at a strategic level, staff member

responsible for implementation and a staff member responsible for additional support and an observation of pupil support.

If you are a research participant, you will receive an email from NFER/The Difference with details of the specific research activities you are invited to participate in.

#### 4. How will NFER and The Difference use and protect the data collected?

All personal data gathered during this study will be held in accordance with the Data Protection Act 2018 and UK GDPR 2021, stored securely and treated in the strictest confidence by NFER and The Difference.

NFER is certified to ISO27001 (GB17/872763) the international standard for information security and holds Cyber Essentials Plus (2dac9450-5174-4c60-9c88-8cb88c7a4090 - recertification due 3 October 2023). NFER operates Microsoft Windows Operating Systems and industry standard enterprise software such as databases and email, all managed to recognised industry standards with a full patching regime. All NFER laptops and mobile storage devices are encrypted and accessed with PIN-codes and strong passwords. Any personal data which is shared with NFER is transferred using its secure portal and is encrypted in transit (HTTPS and TLS 1.2).

The Difference conforms to the requirements of UK GDPR. The Difference research and evaluation team operates Microsoft Windows Operating Systems and industry standard enterprise software. We enforce two-factor authentication on devices, where applicable. Research data shared with The Difference is captured using encrypted recording and is encrypted in transit and stored securely.

We will not name individuals or schools in any report arising from this work unless we ask your permission to do so. Interview data will be analysed and presented at individual and aggregate level.

Further information about how your data will be processed and who to contact if you wish to withdraw from data processing can be found in the Privacy Notice for the study.

#### 5. How will the findings be reported?

All schools participating in the survey will receive a feedback report showing how their school's approach to supporting pupils at risk of exclusion or persistent absence relates to the national picture.

A final report and a summary findings report will be produced from the project. Both of these reports will be published on the EEF website.

#### 6. Who can I contact for more information?

If you have any queries about the project, please contact the NFER project team at: [pupilsupport@nfer.ac.uk](mailto:pupilsupport@nfer.ac.uk)