

Reading the Signs - a discussion aid for identifying the reasons why young people may disengage (Classroom material for teachers)

Beneficiaries

Tutors, Heads of Year, those responsible for inclusion, those responsible for careers advice and guidance. The checklist and the guide are focused on key stage 4.[1]. The discussion aid is suggested for use with young people in Year 9 (so between 13 and 14).

[1] Between academic years 10 and 11

Countries

 [United Kingdom](#)

Country/ies or organisation that developed the tool

National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) (UK)

Date of creation of toolkit and periodicity of updates

2013

Purpose of the toolkit

Guidance on how to identify and monitor early leavers or those at risk of early leaving.

The aim of the tool is “to support schools’ efforts to re-engage young people at risk of not engaging in education, employment or training (NEET) but who do not face multiple and complex barriers to learning.”

Description of each of the tools

There are a number of complementary tools which aim at assisting with the identification

and prevention of early school leaving:

- **The guide “NEET prevention: Keeping students engaged at Key Stage 4 - Top tips for senior leaders”** which offers practical tips to schools in delivering support programmes for this group of students, particularly those aged 14-16. The tips are structured according to the steps one takes in developing a programme:
 - programme objectives
 - resources
 - activities
 - impact
- **The checklist of indicators** for identifying the reasons why young people may be at risk of disengaging. This is divided according to the factors associated to the following themes:
 - structure/environment
 - level of attainment/educational needs
 - factors associated with local education services
 - personal/family circumstances
 - attitude/aspirations
 - progression routes

This checklist is also available in Excel format to facilitate the monitoring of a specific young person.

- **The discussion aid.** This tool is available for use with young people from all years (although originally aimed at those in year 9) and is made up of two pages. The first page presents a series of potential issues which may be afflicting the young person and a series of reasons why these issues may be presenting themselves with some space to write down discussion points. The issues identified are the following:
 - poor behaviour in school
 - poor attendance record
 - negative attitude toward school work/lack of motivation
 - underachieving at school
 - being unhappy at school
 - not engaging in careers information sessions, advice and guidance
 - not getting involved in activities outside school lessons
- The **reasons** suggested are grouped according to the following macro areas:
 - getting on at school and the motivation to do well (e.g. problems travelling to school)
 - learning and training after school (e.g. lack of opportunities/courses locally)
 - about me (e.g. not having the things other people my age have)
 - my family friends and peers (e.g. having difficult relationships with family members)

The second page consists of a concentric pie chart in which the young person can write down the reasons identified above, categorising them according to the amount of influence they exercise over the person (most/some/least).

The tool is a facilitator which can be used in one-to-one meetings with the young person whose behaviour is causing concern. The purpose is to enable the member of staff and the young person to reach a better understanding of the reasons behind their behaviour so that an appropriate support strategy can be put in place.

Type of indicators used in the identification of learners at risk of early leaving

The checklist of indicators is based on the factors associated with disengagement (see above).

Type of guidance given to users

The guide for NEET prevention provides a number of tips for senior figures in school, to help them develop programmes which will help keep students engaged at key stage 4 which is when they tackle their GCSE exams (see above).

Source of information of the different tools

While the tool was designed by a developer, NFER as an independent provider of research, assessment and information services for education, training and children's services provided the content.

Link/s to the toolkit and further information

<https://www.nfer.ac.uk/publications/reading-the-signs-a-discussion-aid-for-identifying-the-reasons-why-young-people-may-disengage/>

Downloads



Reading the Signs

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Source URL: <https://www.cedefop.europa.eu/en/en/tools/vet-toolkit-tackling-early-leaving/resources/reading-signs-discussion-aid-identifying>