



QUICK GUIDE: ATTENDANCE



ATTENDANCE

Many students and families face barriers to school attendance or participation in educational opportunities. It may be challenging for teams to know how to navigate these barriers, while recognizing the need to be mindful of attendance policies, the IEP team’s responsibilities, and the provision of FAPE for each student. There are a variety of reasons that a student may not be able to attend or participate in school. This Quick Guide may help teams consider and address many of the scenarios they may encounter.

A1

Reason:

The student is medically fragile or has a medical condition that requires limited interaction with others due to the risk of exposure to illness.

IEP Team Considerations:

If, under normal circumstances, the student’s Least Restrictive Environment (LRE) is *not* a home placement:

- The IEP team should create and implement an *Individualized Distance Learning Plan* (IDLDP).

If the IEP team has determined that home is the student’s LRE.

- Consider Homebound services following your LEA’s protocol.
- The IEP team should create and implement an IDLP.

A2

Reason:

Someone in the student’s home is medically fragile or has a medical condition that requires limited interaction with others due to the risk of exposure to illness.

OR

Someone in the student’s home has contracted COVID-19 and is ill and/or recovering and student cannot attend school.

IEP Team Considerations:

If your LEA offers comprehensive online instruction for all students:

- If appropriate for the student, consider making an offer of FAPE using your LEA’s guidelines for online programming. Amend and implement an IEP.
- The IEP team should create and implement an IDLP.

If your LEA does not offer comprehensive online options for all students.

- The IEP team should create and implement an IDLP.

A3

Reason:

The student has an extended illness or injury and is ill and/or recovering.

IEP Team Considerations:

If the student is able to participate in educational opportunities and special education services offered by the LEA:

- The IEP team should create and implement an IDLP.

If the student’s condition prevents participation in an IDLP:

- Consider Homebound services following your LEA’s protocol.

A4
Reason:
The student has a medical condition that results in frequent transitions between home, hospital, and school.
IEP Team Considerations:
To avoid disruption of educational services during transitions, consider creating an IDLP outlining how to best implement IEP services and supports in each setting, how progress on IEP goals will be monitored, and how transitions between settings will be managed for each setting (school, home, hospital).
A5
Reason:
The parent/adult student refuses to send the student to school or fails to produce the student for online or remote instruction.
IEP Team Considerations:
The parent/adult student cannot unilaterally change placement for a student. IEP teams are not obligated to change a student's placement based solely on parent preference.
If your LEA offers comprehensive online instruction for all students:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider making an offer of FAPE using your LEA's guidelines for online programming. Amend and implement an IEP.
If your LEA does not offer comprehensive online instruction for all students:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider convening the IEP team to discuss barriers to student attendance. • Refer to your LEA's attendance policy for all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Before taking punitive action regarding attendance, including disenrollment, consider conducting a Manifestation Determination to determine whether the student's absenteeism is related to his/her disability or related to the district's failure to implement the IEP. • The parent/adult student may opt to enroll student in a private school or homeschool.
If the parent/adult student fails to produce the student for online or remote instruction:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider convening the IEP team to discuss barriers to participation. • Consider your district's policies and expectations regarding "attendance" during remote or online learning for all students. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Before taking punitive action regarding attendance, including disenrollment, consider conducting a Manifestation Determination to determine whether the student's absenteeism is related to his/her disability or related to the district's failure to implement the IEP. • Consider making an offer of FAPE resuming in-person instruction. • In the case of an online-only charter school, the parent/adult student may opt to enroll student in a local brick and mortar school.
A6
Reason:
The student is enrolled in the district or charter and will be absent for a long period of time for a vacation, family emergency, or other non-illness related issue.
OR
The student is enrolled in the district or charter and hasn't attended for an extended period for other reasons.

IEP Team Considerations:

Your team should make every effort to communicate with the parent/adult student to find out why the student is not attending school or participating in online or remote instruction and document the efforts made.

If parent/adult student disenrolls the student:

- Refer to your LEA's policy regarding disenrollment for all students.
- Determine whether *Written Notice* is needed.

If parent/adult student does not disenroll the student:

- Your LEA's policy regarding disenrollment may not necessarily apply in this situation.
 - Before taking punitive action regarding attendance, including disenrollment, a Manifestation Determination should be conducted to determine whether the student's absenteeism is related to his/her disability or related to the district's failure to implement the IEP.
 - The district may maintain responsibility for the provision of FAPE to the student unless one of the following is true:
 - Parent/adult student has disenrolled the student.
 - Parent/adult student has indicated that the student will be homeschooled. (Refer to your LEA's policies.)
 - Parent/adult student has enrolled the student in a private school.
 - Records have been requested by another district where the student has enrolled.
- Keep detailed records of attempts to contact student and/or parent.
- Determine whether *Written Notice* is needed.

EXAMPLE SCENARIOS

Scenario 1. The student is enrolled in a virtual school and is in 3rd grade. He is attending all (online) special education services consistently. He is not attending any of his general education classes or completing/submitting any work. He is failing all his classes. The team has met several times to address the lack of attendance and concerns with grades. The parent has stated that they have a lot going on and they are not able to ensure the student attends his classes or completes his work. The team held a manifestation determination meeting and determined that the primary reason for the lack of attendance is not the student's disability. The parent agrees that he is not attending because of the different personal issues happening. [What would be proposed as the next step for this student?](#)

Refer to Item A4

What we know.

The student is enrolled in an online virtual charters school, and the parent has failed to produce the student for online instruction.

The IEP team has already convened several times to attempt to address barriers to attendance. The team has also established the barriers are not related to or caused by the student's disability.

What next?

- The team should consider whether additional supports, adaptations, or accommodations are required during general education to make that learning environment more accessible to the student.

- Even in an exclusively online program, there are times when some level of in-home support may be appropriate in order to ensure that the student can access FAPE. Such options should be discussed and considered by the team. Provide *Written Notice* regarding the team decision.
- Because the student is attending for only certain parts of the day and not others, and this is not related to the student’s disability, the LEA may consider whether the student is effectively *dually enrolled* in the LEA and in homeschool. [Dual Enrollment Q&A](#)
- While students should not be counseled out of charter options, and the team must exhaust its resources in terms of providing a continuum of services for each student, it may be appropriate for the IEP team to discuss whether enrollment in a brick-and-mortar school provides the best opportunity for the student to access FAPE.

Scenario 2. Student is a 12th grade adult student. She is self-enrolled and the only person listed on her contact information. She sporadically attends services and classes for several weeks and then stops logging in (or attending). The school attempts to contact her via phone, email, text, etc. Several staff members have spoken with the student. She has shared she will start attending but never does. She has not attended school for a month. The IEP team has attempted to meet with the student. Invitations were sent via certified mail and email three separate times and the student does not attend the scheduled meetings or respond in any way. [What would be proposed as the next step for this student?](#)

Refer to Item A5

What we know.

The school has made attempts to communicate with the adult student regarding attendance.

The adult student has not indicated intent to disenroll or revoke consent for special education and related services. She has indicated intent to attend. There is no indication that the student has enrolled in private school, homeschool, or another public LEA.

What next?

The district/charter likely remains responsible for the provision of FAPE for this student.

- The IEP team should consider conducting a Manifestation Determination to determine whether absences are related to or caused by the student’s disability and consider offering additional supports based on the team’s decision. Provide *Written Notice*.
- The district/charter should continue to make and document attempts to contact the adult student.
- Document proposed or refused special education actions via *Written Notice* throughout the process, as appropriate.
- Because this student is a 12th grade student, the IEP team should review the student’s post-high school goals and aspirations and consider what steps can be taken to support her in achieving these. (Think outside the box).
- The IEP team should also consider opportunities for credit recovery such as summer school.

Related Resources

- [2021-2022 Attendance and Enrollment Manual](#)
- [Transition to Kindergarten Quick Guide](#)