THINK SLEEP



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Lancashire County Council

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Welcome to the Think Sleep project

Sleep plays a vital role in children's learning, behaviour, health and emotional wellbeing, however sleep habits vary widely across individual children, family routines and home environments impacting on life at school and outcomes.

Think Sleep will support school staff with recognising sleep related difficulties and provide them with tools and resources to address them, ensuring every child has the opportunity to the rest the need to thrive.

How to Use the Think Sleep Identification Checklist

The **Think Sleep Identification Checklist** is a practical tool designed to help education professionals, pastoral staff, and family support workers identify children and young people who may be experiencing sleep difficulties that impact their learning, behaviour, and wellbeing.

This checklist is not an assessment but rather a **starting point for conversation and support**. It helps identify sleep-related concerns that may be contributing to issues such as poor attendance, emotional dysregulation, low level social and communication difficulties or reduced academic engagement.



How to Use the Checklist

- **Observe and Record**
  Use the checklist to note any behaviours observed or reported concerns that may be linked to poor sleep. This might include frequent tiredness, difficulty concentrating, irritability, or inconsistent attendance.

- **Engage in Dialogue**
  Where concerns are identified, initiate a supportive conversation with the child or their parent/carer. See Think Sleep Discussions with Parents. This checklist can help structure this discussion and highlight areas that may need further exploration.

- **Signpost and Support**
  If sleep issues are suspected, consider supporting the child and family with a sleep diary, resources from the Sleep Charity or the Sleep Factors worksheet- included here. See Further signposting to appropriate resources listed in the Think Sleep Mapping Document. You may also use the checklist to inform referrals or targeted interventions.

- **Monitor and Review**
  Keep a record of any actions taken and review progress over time. The checklist can be revisited to assess whether sleep-related concerns are improving or require further support. This information can also inform any further assessments the child may require.

Checklist

Observation-Based Indicators

- [ ] Student often appears tired or drowsy during lessons
- [ ] Student struggles to concentrate or stay focused.
- [ ] Student is irritable, emotional, or unusually withdrawn.
- [ ] Student frequently complains of headaches or feeling unwell.
- [ ] Student has difficulty staying awake during quiet activities

Student Conversations

- [ ] Student mentions staying up late (e.g., gaming, social media, homework).
- [ ] Student talks about feeling tired most mornings.
- [ ] Student reports trouble falling asleep or waking up during the night.
- [ ] Discuss what time the student falls asleep and gets up- is this less than 8 hours?
- [ ] What makes you fall asleep? What do you try to help fall asleep?
- [ ] Does the student use anything to help them sleep?

Cognitive & Behavioural Signs

- [ ] Student shows signs of forgetfulness or slow processing.
- [ ] Student has increased behavioural issues or emotional outbursts.
- [ ] Student is frequently late or absent without clear reasons
- [ ] Does the student use anything to help them sleep?

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Family & Routine, Environment, diet and exercise

- [ ] Family reports sleep difficulties or irregular routines.
- [ ] Student has inconsistent bedtimes or wake-up times.
- [ ] Student uses screens (phone, tablet, TV) close to bedtime.
- [ ] Student has energy drinks/ caffeine/ high sugar diet
- [ ] Student exercises/ plays sport close to bedtime
- [ ] Student takes naps after schools, before bedtime
- [ ] Student shares bedroom
- [ ] Student has own bed/ sufficient bedding/ curtains
- [ ] Student takes medication which may have side effects
- [ ] Student has diagnosed sleep disorder

Emotional regulation Signs

- [ ] Low mood, negative thinking, critical of self or others
- [ ] Apathy/low motivation towards learning
- [ ] Irritability, anger or frustration directed at self or others
- [ ] Changes in peer relationships and friendships due to emotional regulation difficulties
- [ ] Behavioural issues similar to ADHD but which have more recent onset/without these being noticeable in the past

Other Contextual Factors

- [ ] Parents/caregivers have sleep disorders
- [ ] Parents/caregivers struggle to establish or enforce appropriate routines around bedtimes
- [ ] Students vapes or uses vapes with substances in them
- [ ] Alcohol and/or substance misuse within family home
- [ ] Inconsistency in routines if student sleeps at more than one house during a typical week





Be mindful of any cultural practices that families may observe which may make their sleeping arrangements different and result in variance in sleep. This could include any of the following:

- Co-sleeping and room sharing and napping
- Mealtimes into the evening
- Rituals of observances into the evening or at different times of the year
- Multi- generational households
- Take into account the family needs but advise on safer and healthier sleeping and support calm routines that fit the family patterns.

Taking a Compassionate Approach



Recognise that motivation to change comes from:

- Noticing a gap between how things are right now, and how we want them to be
  AND
- Knowing how to get from where we are now to where we want to go

What factors might be within the student's control to change?

- Talk to the student about what they could be able to do
- What factors are within the parent/carers' control?
- Make some supportive and non-judgemental suggestions for how they could adapt things at home

What factors might they not be able to change?

- Acknowledge the impact of these, but don't put pressure on people to tackle them

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Factors	Impact of these factors	What they could try
Within the student's control		
Within parent/ carers' control		
Outside their control		Any other support they could access?



Understanding the Sleep Problem

Why them?

What makes this student more likely to have sleep difficulties?

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Why now?

What is causing the problem?
Is this a new problem or a long-standing problem?
Why have we noticed it now?
Has it got worse, and if so why?

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What keeps it going?

Why isn't it getting better?
Have they tried things that haven't worked?
Is anything stopping them from trying a new approach?

What helps?

What is being tried that is helping?
What has helped in the past?
What stops it from getting worse?
When was it better, and why was that?

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Think Sleep Discussion with Parents

This guide helps professionals discuss a child's sleep routine with parents in a supportive, non-judgemental way. Use these prompts to gather helpful information from parents to consider alongside the identification checklist to offer suggestions and support for better sleep.

Suggestions for discussing

Can you walk me through what a typical bedtime looks like for your child?

Around what time does your child usually go to bed and wake up on school days?

Does this routine change on weekends or holidays?

Where does your child usually sleep?

Do they have their own bed or share with someone?

Does your child use screens, read, or listen to music before bed?

Is the bedroom usually quiet and dark, or are there things that might make it harder to sleep?

Do you notice any difficulties at bedtime, like trouble falling asleep or waking during the night?

How does your child seem in the morning? alert and ready, or tired and hard to wake?

Signpost and Support

Consider support you can offer from school
Look at the resources online from Home - The Sleep Charity thesleepcharity.org.uk See further signposting to appropriate resources listed in the Think Sleep Mapping Document



Sleep Support

For resources, materials and further information

The Sleep Charity - **Home - The Sleep Charity**

CAMHS - Primary mental health - **Children and Young People's Mental Health Services (CYPMH): Lancashire and South Cumbria NHS Foundation Trust**

With You - **Support for Young People in Lancashire | WithYou**

Children and Family Wellbeing - **Children and Family Wellbeing Service - Lancashire County Council**

Compassionate schools' hub and Lancashire emotional health in schools and colleges - **cs-hub.co.uk**

School Nurses Team - **lancschildandfamily.co.uk**





IN PARTNERSHIP WITH

The Sleep Charity - Home - The Sleep Charity**, Twinkle House** - Sensory & Wellness Centre | All Inclusive | Twinkle House, **LCC** and **CAP** - Community Alcohol Partnerships (CAP) | Home

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