

Emily

Age: 14

Grade: 9

Pronouns: she/her

Emily, a grade 9 student, lives with her biological parents and receives support through the Children's Aid Society (CAS) due to parental history of problematic substance use. Both of Emily's parents receive financial support from a local agency. She is an average student, values her academic performance, is very engaged in school activities (soccer and drama club), rarely misses classes and is well-liked by her peers.

The attendance office administrator informs you of an anonymous voice mail message expressing concerns about Emily and rumours that are circulating amongst the other students and on social media about Emily being trafficked.

Upon your investigation, you find out that for the in the past two months, things have changed with Emily. She has frequently been late to afternoon classes or missed class altogether. When speaking with her teachers, you discover that she is unfocused and tends to fall asleep at her desk. Upon further investigation, you learn that Emily has stopped attending school activities for the past month and does not appear to be engaging with her peers. Teachers report that she has begun wearing Adidas and Nike tracksuits, and now has expensive manicures and hair extensions. You are aware that her parents struggle financially, and that she has not typically owned these sorts of items. Her grades have dropped significantly, to the point that she is just barely passing her courses.

A few days later, at the end of the day, Emily appears in the school office, and you notice that she has lost a significant amount of weight, has some bruising on her arms and is disheveled. She is there to inform you that her parents changed their phone numbers and that she would like to update her file.

Others noticed that during lunch period, she walks to the parking lot and leaves the school property in a car with an older boy who does not attend your school. Upon further investigating her attendance record, you notice that Emily has consistently missed the period immediately following lunch.



What are the immediate concerns?

What are your long-term concerns?

In your role as school administrator, what future staff development arises as a result of this case study?

Ask yourself:

- Is there a duty to report anything at this point? To whom?
- How do you respond to an anonymous tip?
- Can Emily update her own data file and contact information?
- Where is Emily going with this “friend” during and after lunch?

What would it look like if...?

- CAS was not involved?
- Emily’s grades were not dropping, and she has not missed any school?