**Supporting pupils who are, or at risk of Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**

It is an obvious fact that all children of school age should attend school regularly in order to fully benefit from education. Nearly 50% of CYP who become Home Educated have a history of persistent non-attendance at school. It is also a high-risk factor for vulnerable CYP who are excluded and those who become NEET.

When pupils do not attend school regularly, there is a challenge to maintain a balance of understanding the reasons, providing the ongoing support the CYP and their family need and the possible necessity to go down the more punitive consequences such as fines. This is especially accurate when supporting a CYP when/if the root causes are due to family, social or health reasons.

Poor attendance can often start at Primary school. Research has shown that even missing a few days can have a significant impact on a child’s social and learning development. Friendships/relationships are affected. A child can fall behind their peers and struggle to catch up with missed learning.

Although the Government does not set specific attendance targets, anything less than 90% is classed as Persistent Absence. Below 90% attendance with recent sporadic periods of unauthorised absence totalling a minimum of 10 days should signal a school to seek further advice from the LA.

EBSA (Emotionally Based School Avoidance) is an ongoing challenge for many schools both at Primary and Secondary level. KCC is one of the most active authorities in taking legal, more punitive action against parents/carers, so it is vital that schools take a proactive, preventative approach in supporting pupils and their families.

Some pupils found attending school prior to our recent lockdown difficult; and many of our CYP have yet to return. Whatever the reasons for the EBSA, if not addressed, the impact on the CYP and their families can be great. It is therefore vital that everyone works collaboratively so that all parties feel supported, validated and are aware of the ‘plan’ to return to school full time.

The following document can therefore be used by schools to support CYPs and their families, offering activities, strategies, considerations and conversations starters to engage with families. This proactive, possibly preventative approach can evidence what is in place, and hopefully the punitive avenue will not be necessary.

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* School to review their procedures in supporting students who are, or at risk of EBSA (Emotional Based School Avoidance)
* Key person to consider the strategies when supporting the CYP and their family

 **CYP isn’t attending School**

Irregularly

Unable

At all

Won’t

Wants to, but can’t

* What is making the CYP chose some days over others to attend?
* What does a good/bad day at home and at school look like?
* How are the student’s emotional responses towards learning supported? E.g. are they a perfectionist that will prefer to disengage rather than get things go wrong?
* Careful management and responses to:-
* Meet and greet at the start of the day
* End of day arrangements
* Possible flexibility in timetable arrangements
* Ensuring that the CYP/parents/carers understand that any time in school, even 20minutes is valuable and progress towards full time education. The answer is NOT simply not to come in.
* Contact parents/carers and agree communication systems ensuring that each engagement has a positive, purposeful agenda
* School offers regular opportunities for the CYP to maintain relationships with staff they perceive as positive
* Consideration regarding social relationships outside of school. If these are less than positive, discuss further ensuring that any safeguarding concerns are address (e.g. links to county lines)
* Disengagement with learning platforms – consider any unmet learning or sensory needs
* School engages with external professionals including Paediatrician, Kent Health Needs, CAMHS to support any Mental Health concerns
* All parties to engage with home visits/virtual meetings.
* Parents/carers to prepare their son/daughter to ensure that they see the support as helpful not punitive
* Discuss the impact of the EBSA as the parents see it. Initial contact with adults only for school to understand the difficulties
* All parties understand the importance of engaging with this process

***If the CYP/family do not engage with any of the support as outlined above, the school may have to proceed with the more punitive approach following LA guidance.***

**Supporting pupils who are, or at risk of Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA) – whole school review**

“*When a flower doesn’t bloom, you fix the environment in which it grows, not the flower”*

Alex DenHeijer

*The following suggestions could be reviewed/reflected upon to support your students who are at risk, or who are experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).*

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | ***Not yet develop-ed*** | ***Develop-ing*** | ***Establish-ed*** | **Action** | **Who?** | **By when?** |
| **Whole school** * Are there systems in place to support pupils who are at risk of, or who are EBSA?
* Are the systems in place flexible to support individual CYP?
* Is there a Key person/s who would be responsible for exploring possible reasons for the EBSA, and communicating with other staff and families (this may also involve seeking further support from external agencies)?
* Is there reflection on who could be the ‘best person’ for each individual CYP e.g. shared interests/hobbies; personality?
* Is there an understanding of the time expectations that supporting the CYP and families may involve and ensuring supervision for staff?
* Is there a co-ordinated approach to ensure student receives a continuity of support?
* Is the whole staff are aware of possible/actual EBSA students?
* Are staff are confident in the systems to support students and their responsibility within this process (e.g. communicating any concerns with key personnel)?
* Are all staff are aware of how they should approach the CYP in order that their interactions are positive and supportive?
* Are all staff are aware of the communication protocols with families?
* Are all staff are aware of the protocols around organising flexible timetables, arranging a Reduced Timetable (RTT), uniform etc. (e.g. Delegation of day to day responsibilities to key person or not)?
* Are considerations given to use of technology for online lessons, learning and/or meetings (e.g. offering a student an alternative classroom/location to ‘attend’ a lesson)?
* Has the DSL been consulted with? Are there any safeguarding concerns with the student being at home? (This may include consulting with external agencies regarding county lines etc.)
* Which external professionals can be consulted or referred to? E.g. CAMHS, Kent Health Needs, Paediatrician to support any Health needs
* What are the expectations on the student to complete any tasks at home?
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| **Key Person responsibilities** **Schools should see the following strategies and ideas as examples of how to engage CYP and families. Not all examples are suitable for all students. This list is not exhaustive.** * Are there considerations for the reasons/triggers for the EBSA?
* Avoidance/anxiety (escaping difficult situations)?
* Attention from significant others?
* Spend more time out of school as it is perceived as ‘more fun’?
* Is there a personalised plan for each individual?

This may include* Agreeing the regularity of phone calls and visits home and the purpose of each
* A possible flexible approach to their timetable (RTT)
* Arrangements for travelling to/from school
* Arrangements for the start and end of the day (e.g. ‘check in/out’ with key person, debrief, going through the day’s lessons (emphasising the positive) and making sure CYP leaves with a ‘looking forward to seeing you tomorrow’)
* Specific intervention when in school (e.g. where to go if feeling overwhelmed, who to see, non-verbal/verbal signal to CT if they need to leave a lesson)
* Expectations for uniform
* Is there an agreement in place as to who will complete the activities with the CYP and how? (If you feel that a parent would be wiling/able to complete the activities, ensure that clear guidance is given to parents/carers about the outcomes)
* Have you considered offering students a peer mentor/buddy who may have previously experienced similar difficulties and has overcome them?
* Have you considered ways to involve student in school community events to try to ensure that they have a *sense of belonging?*
* Have you considered ways to structure unstructured times to offer a sense of stability and routine?
* Have you considered if the student could have a role/responsibility? A task/job that ‘doesn’t matter’ if it is completed or not (so that the student does not feel overwhelmed by the task)
* Have you considered how to ensure that the student’s views are heard (what would the student want people to know about school for him/her?)
* Have you considered how to ensure that the student’s parents/ carers’ views are heard?
* If the student is concerned about the welfare of a parent/carer at home, could the adult share their day’s timetable so that the child and adult could have a parallel timetable?
* Have you considered using the ‘Supporting pupils return to school’ document and agreeing small targets for the family to achieve?
* Is the pupil aware of the implications of their non-attendance may have on their family? I.e. do they understand that their parents could be prosecuted/fined? What are their thoughts/feelings around this?
 |  |  |  |  |  |  |

**Supporting pupils who are, or at risk of Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA): Key Person Review**

*The behaviours/feelings displayed and/or experienced will be individual for every student but consider the following indicators as possible indicators that the student may be experiencing Emotionally Based School Avoidance (EBSA).*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Behaviour/s observed**  | ***Observations*** | ***Comments*** * *What is in place to support?*
 |  * *What can we put in place?*
 |
| **Behaviour** * Anxiety leaving the home for *any* activity
* Anxiety leaving the parent/carer
* A history of EBSA in the family
* Over-dependence and/or inappropriate dependence on family members (e.g. family members completing tasks for their child)
* Anxiety expressed for the safety of those at home
* Social avoidance and/or isolation with peers
* Low self-esteem/confidence
* Extreme moods: happy/sad
* Challenging behaviours when requested to talk about attendance and/or asked to complete a seemingly simple request (this could be a physical behaviour or avoidance)
* Physical symptoms e.g. rapid weight loss/gain, headaches, stomach pains, sweating, panic attacks
* Reluctance to attend school trips
* Self-harm
 |      |   |   |
| **School attendance** * Patterns in absence on particular days and/or subjects
* Returning to school after a school holiday is often difficult
* Frequent absences for minor illnesses
* No ‘good’ reasons for absences
 |      |   |   |
| **Attitudes to learning** * CYP expresses a ‘want’ to participate in favoured lessons/activities, but is seemingly unable to do so
* Not fulfilling learning potential in different subjects (i.e. not just one subject)
* Isolated from peers within lessons and/or social times
* Seemingly unable to focus or concentrate on tasks within a lesson
* Unorganised with equipment and/or homework tasks

  |      |   |   |

*Other relevant/important information*

**Supporting pupils who are, or at risk of Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**: **Working with parents/carers**

**Possible conversations/questions to ask parents/carers**

* What does a typical morning and evening routine look like in your house?
* What is the impact on …………………………… not attending school have on other family members?
* When ……………………………….. has managed to successfully come to school, what was different about this day?
* What has been the most helpful thing that you, or someone else has done in supporting you and ………………………………..so far? And what has been the least?
* When all is calm at home, what does………………………………….. say that is ‘good’ about school?
* What support networks do you have to help you at home?
* What does………….do when at home all day? What can we expect from him/her with regards to home learning? What could you do at home to discourage home being a better option e.g. turning off Wi-Fi between 8-4pm?
* Is there a difference in outcome if you are able to try repeatedly to get …………to come into school over the course of a day compared to if he/she knows that if they haven’t left by 8am, they will be left alone as you have to go to work?
* Who does …………..associate with outside of school who may be perceived as negative influences? How can we work together to discourage?
* What was …………………………like in pre-school/primary/start of secondary school? Did they enjoy?
* What do you think …………………………………’s strengths are? What do they enjoy? What are their interests? (Not necessarily school based)
* What would ……………………………….say his/her strengths are?
* How would you feel that \* *starting the day earlier/bit later* would help? (\* Any strategy discussed)
* Who would …………………………….. say he/she has a good relationship with at school? Why do you think this person was chosen?
* How has lockdown changed perceptions of school for……..? Did they miss it because it wasn’t there? Did they complete the home learning tasks? Has the increased risk of infection affected anxiety?
* What do you think ………………………………….would want his/her teachers to know about him/her? (not necessarily about his/her EBSA)
* We will contact you daily/weekly/fortnightly\* with the purpose of …………………………………………………………………………………………………………………..

**Supporting pupils who are, or at risk of Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**

 Introducing the Grid to Families:

This grid is intended to provide a framework to support families in helping their children to make a successful return to school.

It is hoped that, by providing small steps parents and students can see progress and avoid an ‘all or nothing’ message where success is entirely predicated on being in lessons and anything else is perceived as ‘failure’. The message is that this is a joint effort and that the contributions of student, family and school are all key.

It is hoped to move away from a sense that the parents are required to do ‘just one thing’ which is to get their child through the door and that the school will do the rest: we know from experience that it is rarely as simple as that!

Some families can become very defensive when their children are not attending school and may appear unco-operative: we hope that this system will also allow schools to demonstrate that families are engaging with school in attempts to support students to attend, which could be helpful when looking at data and also the possibility of punitive action. Families who refuse to engage with even tiny steps however can be demonstrated not to be supporting efforts to increase attendance.

The grid is intended to be very flexible, and is to be adapted based on an understanding of the individual family circumstances and needs. Some families may benefit from having a large grid, and in keeping areas which have been completed successfully visible as a motivator and reminder of progress. Others may need a very slimmed down grid with only one or two squares to work on at a time.

The grid looks at a number of areas – again some may be more relevant than others in individual cases – judgements should be made as to whether to omit areas which are not priorities, or whether to keep these as ‘easy wins’.

Each area of the grid can be personalised to include steps which feel achievable. Showing what is being done at school alongside what the family and the YP has been asked to do can also foster than sense of being a ‘team’. The small steps approach can also allow for documentation of supportive strategies which might be ‘assumed’ in school and not usually committed to paper but which are actually important parts of the support package: anxious parents and YP may not recall these after a meeting if only presented verbally. Not only does including them on the grid acknowledge these small but mighty elements, but it also can serve as a reminder for staff - everyone is so busy that some of the small things can easily be overlooked.

You may discover that the YP is very able to manage an activity or you may find that the activity needs to be repeated.  If you need to look at it again, have a look at smaller steps to help achieve it, remembering that even a little success is a step forward.

Try them in any order, remembering to revisit the ones that may need more time.

When you look at a task, review how you think it has gone by putting a circle around the number.  Hopefully when you revisit the activity, the number will be lower – but don’t worry if it’s not!

1. Achieved, all good!
2. Done it, but may need a bit more time to revisit/reassure
3. Tried it, but will need to look at it again
4. Don’t worry, we will try again another day

*Here is an example of targets for families to work on*

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|    My daughter/ son’s uniform is ready, fits and s/he can put it on independently.    **1     2    3    4**   |   We have talked about how we can still fit in the things my son/ daughter enjoys at home when s/he goes back to school.   **1     2    3    4**  |   I have thought of things to tell someone at school about what my son/daughter has achieved at home – there are positives!  **1     2    3    4**  |  My son/daughter has opportunities to communicate their thoughts and feelings about returning to school.  This could be through discussions or using the questionnaires and feelings scales sent from school.  **1     2    3    4**  |
|    We remember the small successes every day, and remind each other of how far we have come.   **1     2    3    4**  |   We have practised leaving the house, when there is no pressure to get to school.   **1     2    3    4**  |  I have spoken to a trusted friend or someone from school about my own feelings/worries  about my child returning to school.   **1     2    3    4**   |   I know the date of the next meeting and what we are working on before that    **1     2    3    4**  |
|   I have read the correspondence/ emails from the school.    **1     2    3    4**  |  I am keeping my words and body language positive in front of my son/daughter.  All conversations are as positive as possible!   **1     2    3    4**  |  We have worked on independence skills – my child is more confident about doing things for him/herself   **1     2    3    4**  |  My son/daughter is getting into a regular sleep pattern.  A good night’s sleep and a consistent wake up time will help get into a routine ready for school. **1     2    3    4**   |

|  |
| --- |
| **What information do we have about the plan to return to school?** I have read the emails/correspondence from the school and now know the following:  * The next meeting will be on………………with…………………at school/ on Teams etc….……………
* The next step for my child will be …………………………………………………………………………………………………
* Names of teachers…………………………………………………………………………………………………………….
* Any other key people.............................................................................................................

If my child is going to go into school for some or all of the day we have worked out: * What time they need to arrive and where
* Whether someone will meet my son/daughter at the start of the/ their day
* What they will be doing – going to particular lessons/ spending time with Key person
* Whether the need to take anything with them – many schools are giving children their own pack of equipment to avoid sharing
* Whether I will meet my son/daughter somewhere specific at the end of the/ their day
* If they will have lunch at school? How will that work? School meal/packed lunch/ canteen/ elsewhere/ pay card?

If they have work/ other tasks to complete we have  * Found a good place for them to work, somewhere to keep their work and the things they need e.g. a pen so they are organised
* Checked s/he understands the work or asked for clarification
* Worked out how to tackle the work – Ten minutes at a time? Two questions?
* Found out what to do with the tasks when completed – email? Take to school?

Complete any information with my son/daughter * Pupil passport – likes and dislikes
* Transition workbook (if appropriate)
* Medical forms

Talk about school * Refer to going to school in passing
* Keep things positive – avoid getting drawn into ‘I’m not going’ conversations
* Pick up on achievements or things of interest - comment that their teacher would be interested/ impressed by that
* Talk about things in the future in terms of ‘after school’ or ‘at the weekend’ – it’s easy to get away from those structures if you’re at home all the time.
* Recall things which your child has previously enjoyed at school – trips/ sports days/ particular topics?
* Drive past the school on the way to the shops or on the way home from the park.
* Look at the route on the internet – are there several possibilities?
* Practice making the journey, particularly if your child is due to start a new school. Find out (realistically) how long it takes – especially in the rush hour
*
 |
| **What have I learnt about my child in the time s/he has been at home?** * What has my son/daughter experienced that has surprised me? (E.g. increased vocabulary/better sleep patterns/more or less social within the family?)
* Has your child been getting up and dressed independently when there wasn’t a time pressure? Could you introduce a timer challenge with a reward to support them doing this more quickly? Can they ‘beat their own time?’ Would a visual checklist help them to do this? Look [here](https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-c-122-visual-timetable--getting-ready-for-school---boys) or [here](https://www.twinkl.co.uk/resource/t-c-126-visual-timetable-getting-ready-for-school---girls)
* If your child has slept better, has this been because electronic devices are switched off at a consistent time? If not, could you introduce a family rule about this?
* Has your child persisted at a task and learned new skills? Has this made you realise that your child can master new skills even if they find them hard? Look at photos of them when they were learning to walk/ feed them self/ ride a bike and remember how many times they had to try before they got it right – and now they can do all these things easily!  Share this with your child and reminded them about other skills they’ve learned (keepy uppies; skateboarding; handstands; finishing a Lego model?)
* Tell your children about when you learned to drive and it felt really hard to remember all the things you had to do – now you can do them all automatically while holding a conversation!
* Think about what they have learned since they were last at school– not necessarily ‘academic’ things but can they now tell the time/ do their own shoelaces/ make a cup of tea/ talk to Gran on Zoom?
* Tell your child how proud of them you are and share this with extended families and friends! Remind yourself that you’re doing a great job!

   |
| **How are we communicating as a family our feelings about the return to school?** Talking about feelings * Make sure you have someone you can talk to about your own feelings – your child needs you to be confident in their ability to manage school, so avoid sharing any anxieties you may have with them – or allowing them to overhear conversations
* Talk about your own feelings day to day – label your emotions ‘I’m *frustrated* that I had to hold for 10 minutes to get through to Talk Talk….’ /‘I’m *disappointed* that there weren’t any…. at Tesco’ / ‘I’m *relieved* I found my purse.’
* Would they benefit from more support to communicate their feelings about their lockdown experience? [Here](https://reachoutasc.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/08/MyLockdownExperience.pdf)  is an activity that you could try with your child.  The resources [Here](https://youngminds.org.uk/find-help/looking-after-yourself/coronavirus-and-mental-health/) may help support older pupils
* If you notice your child’s behaviour changing when you talk about school, can you change the activity or choose a different time to talk? E.g. while in the car/ walking/ colouring/doing a routine household activity (not just before bedtime, unless your child starts the conversation)
* Try to swerve ‘I hate it/you’ or ‘I’m not going and you can’t make me’ conversations.  When emotions are heightened, we are often unable to say exactly what/how we are feeling or we are feeling powerless with the situation we find ourselves in.  In these situations, try to remain calm (never easy!) and connect their words with what's happening e.g. You don’t want to go to school and you got angry. Or, I hear you are upset with me.
* Model identifying the behaviour/ issue that makes you/ your child upset – avoid ‘You’ve upset me’ and try ‘I feel upset when you…’ instead.
* Talk about things you felt nervous about but managed successfully and how proud that made you feel e.g. driving test/ new job/ moving house etc.
* Consider a visual - either choose an emoji which matches your mood or rate yourself on a scale of 1-5. Encourage everyone in the family to do so – and show how it is OK to have different feelings and also how they change over the day
* Use descriptive language – ‘I think you’re feeling annoyed because your face is getting red and you are clenching your teeth’ – try to avoid happy/ sad/ angry unless the child is at a very early stage of development – look for the lower and middle level emotions rather than extremes. E.g. pleased/ irritated/ disappointed/ worried
* Talk about what you do when you need to regulate – do you go for a walk/ make a cup of tea/ stroke the cat? What helps you to feel calmer? Help your child to think of things which make them feel calmer
* Remember to model how we often need to take a few minutes to calm but then feel able to come back to a task. Regulation is not just about avoiding things we don’t like.
* Be explicit about rewarding yourself and your child – say ‘I’m going to have a lovely long bath now because I’ve cleaned the oven which I hate doing.’; ‘You worked really hard on that Maths/ tidying your room, let’s go to the park/ watch your favourite DVD’ etc.
* Politely but firmly discourage others from talking about any negative experiences of school they may have had or any worries / views they may have about how your child will manage at school in front of him/ her. That includes professionals! Feel free to share this document to show how much you have been doing to help your child in getting ready to get back to school and ask them how they could help to support this.

  |
| **What else can we do to support my child’s return to school?** * Can we go through the plan together?

**Leaving the bedroom**  * No meals in bedrooms unless ill in bed, no drinks until previous dirty cup brought downstairs!
* Wash bedding weekly and avoid re making the bed until the end of the day
* Encourage fresh air – open windows and try to persuade your child to go into the garden (if you have one) daily – consider getting a bird feeder!
* Tech charging point downstairs  - consider fitting a socket/ adapter which takes USB then ‘lose’ three pin plugs

 **Leaving the house**  Practise the ‘new normal’ Your child may feel anxious about going out if they haven’t been doing so very much – and you may be worried about whether they will remember to socially distance, keep their hands clean and avoid touching things  * Go for walks in local open spaces, if you have not been doing so already, but also including some ‘pavement walking’- perhaps post a card for a relative or friend?
* Model how to step aside if someone is coming to avoid close contact: we are not frightened of other people, we are simply keeping a safe distance.
* Model and discuss how to politely ask someone to move if they are in your way e.g. standing close to a doorway / entrance you need to go through.
* Try to remind your child calmly about rules, and remember to praise them for getting things right. When we are anxious it is easy for children to feel they are being

‘told off’ * You will have been encouraging your family to wash their hands more frequently, but if you have not really been going out try to ensure that you expect everyone to wash their hands every time they come inside and every time they blow their nose (and bin that tissue!).
* Meet another person in the park or another outdoor space: talk without breaching social distancing to allow your child to see that it is possible to meet someone safely without needing to ‘get up close and personal’: consider sharing a computer app which you can both see without sharing. Play games such as ‘Simon Says’ / Eye Spy which do not require any physical contact.
* Consider taking sweets or a drink with you – introduce the need to clean hands with gel before consuming these.

**Independence/Self- help skills**  Be mindful of how much support you are giving your child. In the current situation we all need emotional reassurance and children should be confident that their families will provide this. However, if your children have been at home you may well have been helping them to do things which they were previously doing independently at school.   * Think about getting dressed – not just joggers and t shirts! Buttons, shoe laces… (see ‘uniform’ below)
* What about using the toilet? What about hand washing? Do they have any idea what 20 seconds feels like? What is their favourite song to sing (aloud or in their

head depending on age!) while washing their hands? Consider drawing up a list of songs to sing when washing hands and voting on your family’s favourite – or the one people find most annoying!  * Can your child blow their nose? Do they know that they should put tissues in the bin? Leaving them on the floor or on furniture won’t support good relationships

with peers or staff. Remind them and explain why it is important – try not to do it for them! * What about cutting up food / opening packets? Could you try out different brands for packed lunch that are easier to open – or decant them into a different

container (at home so that the child understands this is the same food they like, just presented differently) * Rediscover healthy snacks which will be allowed at school and try to keep sweets for weekends or after school
* Doing tasks independently – school work but also ‘jobs’ around the house – try to ensure that your child has to do something you ask them to do every day, not only things they choose.
* Planning what you need when going out and encouraging your child to make a list then check the things off before you go e.g. hand sanitiser/ mask/ shopping list etc. to prepare for packing their own school bag/ remembering lunch/ book bag/ PE kit etc.
* Going out at an agreed time – if you’re going to the shop or to the park agree a time and expect them to be ready!
* Try not to ‘hover’ once your child knows what to do, ask them to tell you when they’ve finished, then make a big fuss of them.
* Make ‘em wait! Try not to be always immediately available – in school realistically your child may have to wait for an adult’s attention.
* For older children, think about ‘red and green’ questions – questions which don’t need to be asked (perhaps make it a game when you’re in the car or during a meal?) then have a silly noise you make (or find a toy/ bell etc.) when someone asks an unnecessary question E.g. Is it raining? Is it Saturday? What time is it?
* Use visuals – write down what is happening on a calendar or just make a ‘today’ or ‘this week’ list on the fridge – encourage your child to consult it rather than keep asking you- and model using it yourself – tick things off as you’ve done them e.g. Mum collect prescription/ Dad phone plumber etc.

**Bedtime/morning routines** * Getting dressed first thing, rather than part way through the day/ staying in PJs!
* Getting up at the same time each morning – and starting to make that earlier each few days to get back to a realistic time for getting to school.
* Start to aim for a consistent bedtime – try to get into a routine so that there isn’t an argument and your child is calm and ready for rest when s/he goes to bed.

**Uniform** * Think about school uniform – are there items your child has difficulty with? Could they practise at home? Check whether they have grown! Items which are now too small will be harder to put on independently. Similarly, try on new items and practise fastenings, tying laces etc. at home.
* Look at uniform on website
* Check where uniform can be bought and identify size – shoe/ trouser length/ waist/ collar
* Check options – skirt or trousers/ long or short socks or tights/ real or elasticated tie?
* Purchase – mail order or parent going out separately if shopping likely to be overwhelming
* Hang up uniform in view
* Try on single item
* Are there any itchy labels to remove? Would it be softer if it had been washed – as well as smelling more familiar?
* Try on what I need to wear everyday/ for indoor PE/ outdoor PE
* Practise any tricky items – shoelaces/ top button/ tie
* Facetime/ Zoom fashion show for grandparents/ aunt

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**Supporting pupils who are, or at risk of Emotional Based School Avoidance (EBSA)**

**Activities to support CYP**

**The following are activities/suggestions/conversation starters for the key person to help devise a personalised plan for the CYP they are working with. The key person should use their knowledge of the CYP to decide which are most appropriate, and the best time to engage**

* Complete the questionnaire with the CYP (Can be online or paper)
* Ensure that feelings/emotions are acknowledged and validated – can they name/label/draw out their feelings?
* Discuss how they would ‘visualise’ a ‘good’ day – what would the start of the day/the journey look like? Who would greet them in school? What would happen during unstructured times? How would the end of the day look?
* Use a scale/thermometer/ladder to discuss what aspects of the school day make them feel more/less anxious (if this is the word they use). There is an example of an activity included in this resource.
* Discuss specific concerns around any timetable factors or times of the day
* Discuss any concerns around any learning issues in specific lessons or examinations
* Discuss any concerns around friendship or peer groups
* Consider offering students a peer mentor/buddy who may have previously experienced similar difficulties and has overcome them
* Consider ways to involve student in school community events to try to ensure that they have a *sense of belonging.*
* Consider ways to structure unstructured times to offer a sense of stability and routine
* Can the student have a role/responsibility? A task/job that ‘doesn’t matter’ if it is completed or not (so that the student does not feel overwhelmed by the task)
* Consider how to ensure that the student’s views are heard (what would the student want people to know about school for him/her?)

|  |
| --- |
| **Personalised plan for…………………………………………………….** |
| Start of the day arrangements |  | Support from key people |  |
| End of the day arrangements |  | Support from peers |  |
| Unstructured times |  | Other arrangements  |  |
| Timetable arrangements |  |
| Uniform |  |
| Possible support during lessons (to include verbal/non-verbal cue to indicate exit, and to where) |  |

**The School day:**

Think about what elements of the whole school day are more/less stressful/worrying for you.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | I feel OK about this – I can manage this part of the day |
|  | I sometimes worry about this part of the day. I do not like it, but I can usually cope |
|  | I very often or always worry about this part of the day. I cannot manage it |

Tick the colour which you feel is the most appropriate one for you. Use the blank boxes to choose specific times of the day that you most/least like

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| The alarm clock goes, or someone wakes me up. I have to get up and get ready. | The journey to and from school. |  Assemblies | Walking around the school to the different classrooms |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| When teachers ask me to write | Break/social times | When teachers ask me to talk in class | When teachers ask me to work with other students |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lunch times | Tests | Homework | When my parents/carers come into school |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| When I work with another adult | When I work on my own |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Things that are manageable  |  | Things that I cannot manage  |
|   |  |  |
| What could be put in place to give you coping strategies to help make it turn yellow? |
|  |

**Sometimes coming to school is tricky.....**

* ***The following questions could be converted onto Forms as an electronic questionnaire. The answers could be used to help staff understand possible reasons for school avoidance. It is recommended that the scale*** *1= never 2=seldom 3=sometimes 4=half the time 5=usually 6=almost always 7=always* ***is used to generate answers***

Children and Young people sometimes have different reasons for not going to school. Some feel badly at school, some have trouble with other people, some just want to be with their family, and others like to do things that are more fun outside of school. This form asks questions about why you don't want to come to school. For each question, pick one number that describes you best for the last few days. After you answer one question, go on to the next. Don't skip any questions. There are no right or wrong answers, just pick the number that best fits the way you feel about going to school and select the number

*Christopher A. Kearney, Anne Marie Albano*

* 1. How old are you?
* Single choice
* 5-7
* 7-11
* 11-12
* 13-14
* 15-16
* 17-18
1. How often do you have bad feelings about going to school because you are afraid of something related to school (for example tests, bus, teacher, fire alarm)?
* Rating*1= never 2=seldom 3=sometimes 4=half the time 5=usually 6=almost always 7=always*
* 1
* : never.
* 7
* : always .

3. How often do you stay away from school because it is hard to speak with other kids at school?

* Rating
* 1
* : never.
* 7
* : always .

4. How often do you feel you would rather be with your parents/carers than go to school?

* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 5. When you are not in school during the week (Monday to Friday), how often do you leave the house and do something fun?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never .
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 6. How often do you stay away from school because you will feed sad or depressed if you go?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 7. How often do you stay away from school because you feel embarrassed in front of other people at school?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 8. How often do you think about your parents or family when in school?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 9. When you are not in school during the week (Monday to Friday) how often do you talk or see other people (other than your family)?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 10. How often do you feel worse at school (for example, scared, nervous or sad) compared to how you feel at home with friends?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 11. How often do you stay away from school because you do not have many friends there?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 12. How much would you rather be with your family than go to school?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 13.When you are not in school during the week (Monday to Friday) how much do you enjoy doing different things (for example being with friends, going places)
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 14. How often do you have bad feelings about school (e.g. scared, nervous or sad) when you think about school on a Saturday or Sunday?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 15. How often do you stay away from certain places in school (e.g. hallways, places where certain groups of people are) where you would have to talk to someone?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 16. How much would you rather be taught by your parents at home than by your teacher at school?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 17. How often do you refuse to go to school because you want to have fun outside of school?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 18. If you had less bad feeling (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) about school, would it be easier for you to go to school?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 19 .If it were easier for you to make new friends, would it be easier for you to go to school?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 20. Would it be easier for you to go to school if your parents went with you?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 21. Would it be easier for you to go to school if you could do more things you like to do after school hours (e.g. being with friends?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 22. How much more do you have bad feelings about school (e.g. scared, nervous, sad) compared to other kids your age?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 23. How often do you stay away from people at school compared to kids your age?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 24. Would you like to be home with your parents more than other kids your age would?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.
* 25. Would you rather be doing fun things outside of school more than most kids your age?
* Rating
* 1 Star
* : Never.
* 7 Stars
* : Always.

Thank you for taking your time to answer all of the questions! If you would like to tell us anything that was not asked in the questions, please write below

* Single line textMore question types
* Not available when form is shared externally. Change your setting to "Only people in my organisation can respond"